I'D VENTURE ALL FOR THEE!

J. S. FLETCHER

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I'D VENTURE ALL FOR THEE!

Thrills, suspense, and action punctuate this story of a brave young Scotch nobleman who fled his country with a price on his head because he had cast his lot with the Stuarts in the Rising of 1745. Seeking to escape from England, he met with adventures and romance aplenty.

Exciting episodes lead to dramatic climaxes—all drawn from the actual history of the romantic time and characters: the hero is an ancestor of the author, who tells the splendid story skilfully and bravely.

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I'D VENTURE ALL FOR THEE!

ALSO BY

J. S. FLETCHER

HARDICAN'S HOLLOW
THE HARVEST MOON
DANIEL QUAYNE
MARCHESTER ROYAL
THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL
MILL OF MANY WINDOWS
SECRET OF THE BARBICAN
THE HEAVEN KISSED HILL
THE COPPER BOX
THE VALLEY OF HEADSTRONG MEN

I'D VENTURE ALL FOR THEE!

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A ROMANCE OF THE YORKSHIRE COAST,

1746

BY J. S. FLETCHER

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
1928

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FIRST EDITION

FOREWORD

It may be of interest to American readers of the following story to hear certain particulars of the topography connected with it and of the idea which prompted its writing. The opening scenes are laid at Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire—and Boroughbridge is one of the most interesting places in the old England which is fast disappearing. A tiny, at first glance insignificant market-town, on the River Ure, not far from Fountains Abbey and Ripon, there is little in its modern aspect to remind one that in former times it was a place of great importance as a coaching centre, and before the railways came, as busy as a great city railway station is to-day. For Boroughbridge lies on the famous Great North Road, and till about 1850 hundreds of stage-coaches, post-chaises, and similar vehicles passed its bridge every day, to pull up at one or other of the great roomy, comfortable old inns which are now converted into dwelling-houses. About the beginning of the last century, when coaching had reached its highest point of development, at least 150 horses for stage-coach purposes always stood ready, at a moment's notice, in the Boroughbridge stables. That has all gone—long since; so, too, has another feature of road life. Through this little town, bustling and animated enough then, used to pass

great droves of Scotch cattle on their way to the Midlands and the South of England. There were usually hundreds in a drove, and nearly two thousand head have been known to pass through Boroughbridge in a day. The passing of these vast herds brought trade to the blacksmiths, for it was necessary to shoe the cattle after the fashion of horses, and there is record of 30,000 nails for bullock shoes being made at Langthorpe, a village just outside Boroughbridge, on the north, in one year, and of a blacksmith at the same place earning £6 in one day by shoeing cattle. I have dealt with this feature of Boroughbridge life in my story —and also with another, the great annual event known as the Barnaby Fair, a carnival, nominally of nine days but usually spreading into three weeks, during which the old town underwent a transformation. On the commons and in the fields outside camped gipsies, hawkers, tinkers, fortune-tellers, horse-copers, ragamuffins of every description, and on certain days any householder might, if he pleased, transform himself into a publican by hanging a bush or branch of a tree before his front door: there are still in the town a few houses over the old doors of which the iron staples for the bushes are yet to be seen. But the scene of this story shifts—from Boroughbridge to a village adjacent to the edge of the North Sea; a village and farmstead set in a peculiarly interesting district. If whoever reads this will take down his atlas and look at a good map of northern England, he will see that the Yorkshire

coast possesses a remarkable promontory called Flamborough Head (off which, by the bye, Paul Jones fought one of his naval battles) and, landward of the Head, a line drawn across country and marked *The Danes' Dyke*. Now that Danes' Dyke is as interesting an affair from a physical-geography and ethnology point of view as anyone can meet in England. It is a deep, dry trench, of vast depth, of great length, which completely cuts off Flamborough Head, its village, its people, from the mainland. Blackmore, the author of LORNA DOONE, who laid the scene of his other well-known novel, MARY ANERLEY, at Flamborough, considered the Danes' Dyke to have been made at least 1,000 or 1,100 years ago, by Danes who wished to make here a colony of their own. They did make it; the corner cut off is still called *Little Denmark,* and the folk who inhabit it carry their isolation to the point of contempt for all outsiders, whom they call *indwellers*. Around this curious fortification, for it is no less, the old Danish strain is still mightily in evidence, and the names which I have used in the following story, Olaf, Swend, Freda, Throxenby, Dring, may be seen on village tombstones and heard in village talk, hereabouts, to this day.

And there is one more matter, relative to this story, which may be of interest to my readers in America. It is the story, told with almost literal adherence to fact, of my own great-great-great maternal grandfather. He was the holder of one of the oldest titles in the ancient Peerage of Scotland,

who, soon after he had attained his majority, took a more or less active part in the Rising of 1745, and, as an adherent of the Royal House of Stuart, was proscribed, attainted, had a price set on his head, and, scraping together what he could in the way of money, fled, disguised as a cattle drover, across the border into England. There, by chance, he fell in with a family hailing from the Danes' Dyke and took shelter with it; eventually, he married the daughter of his host, and assuming an English name, settled down as a sheep-farmer on the Yorkshire Wolds. This is his story as set down here in these pages—his and the girl's whose love he valued more than rank or title.

J. S. Fletcher

15 November, 1927.

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I'D VENTURE ALL FOR THEE

CHAPTER I

THE CATTLE DROVER

IN THE very heart of Yorkshire, on the banks of the River Ure, and on the Great North Road, with the old Roman village of Isurium, now called Aldborough, on one side of it, and Ripon, the city of St. Wilfrid of good and pious memory, on the other, lies Boroughbridge, one of the many little towns, once prosperous and flourishing, that have slowly dropped to decay since the stage-coaches were driven off the English highways. A fair town and a goodly it still is, with a wide street, an ancient church, old houses and mansions and inns, and a great bridge over the Ure, from the northern bank of which starts out in a straight line that piece of road-making which, first called Leeming Lane, and afterwards by many another name, runs always straight and purposeful towards the Northern lands and the Cheviot Hills and Scotland. In Borough-bridge Street, and on the great bridge, and on the road, south or north of the little town, whoever will may watch long and stately processions of ghosts go by until he has bridged history from the recent times

wherein hurrying lovers flew northward with creaking post-chaise and sweating horse to Gretna, to those far-distant ones, wrapped about in the grey mists of history's morning, when the Roman legionaires pushed their way to the North and the unknown, over the Yorkshire lands which they were to rule for four great centuries. Here, as in all ancient places, Time stands still for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Down the deep drop from Kirby Hill to the little hamlet of Langthorpe, lying at the northern end of the great bridge over the Ure, there came in a whirl of white dust one afternoon in the early June of 1746, a mighty herd of panting and sweating cattle, with men and dogs in front, and more men and dogs behind. There were some seven or eight hundred beasts in that herd, collected in the Lowlands of Scotland, and destined for the markets in the South of England. Folk who lived anywhere along the stretches of the Great North Road were familiar enough with the presence and passage of such herds as this. Sometimes a herd was three hundred strong; not seldom it was a thousand or fifteen hundred strong. Over the border-line at Carter Fell it came in charge of its drovers, Scotch and English, and passing through the wild Northumbrian morasses by way of Rochester and Otterburn, entered into a more civilised and pastoral country as it crossed the little River Rede, whose waters once ran red with the blood of the Percys and the Douglases. It came into a still more populated land as it strag-

gled with shouting man and charging dog across the Tyne at Corbridge into the plains of Durham, but when the Palatine County was left behind and Yorkshire was entered at Piercebridge on the Tees, it encountered a long stretch of highway on which the wayside villages were few and far between. Such a herd foraged for itself as it came along, but always at its own cost. Here and there it halted on the broad stretches of turf at the highway side, paying tribute to the authorities of the parish in which pause was made; here and there it was turned into the meadows of farmer or yeoman for necessary rest and refreshment.

Folk who travelled by night along the road came suddenly upon watch-fires lighted at either end of a set picket when the beasts halted on the highway; in the glare of the fires they saw the weary things resting under the hedgerows and the drovers walking up and down the edge of the grass to keep an uneasy or wakeful bullock from straying into the way of stage-coach or post-chaise. In this fashion, picking their bite, getting their sup as they went, always travelling slowly lest the beef into which they were to be turned should suffer, longhorn and shorthorn moved south in charge of a bevy of drovers scarce less wild than themselves, at whose ragged coat-tails all manner of dogs from collies to Dandie Dinmonts kept up a perpetual snapping and barking.

But, however slowly or however quickly a herd might move on its way from the Scottish meadows

to the English shambles, there was one thing that must be done during that strange exodus—the beasts must be shod. No hoof, however hard, could stand the long journey of hundreds of miles which made the geographical difference between the braes of Selkirk and the cobbles of Smithfield. The cattle were shod before they toiled up the northern slopes of the Cheviots, and the shoes were little worn when they had crossed the soft ground between the Teviot and the Tyne. But when they came to the hard surface of the stage roads the shoes grew thin and smooth, and by the time the centre of Yorkshire was approached, it was also time to replace them. And at this hamlet of Langthorpe, at the foot of Kirby Hill, and just before the passage of the bridge over the Ure was entered upon, stood a noted smithy wherein in a single year tens of thousands of cattle had their shoes renewed ere they resumed their march to the South. One master of that smithy shod one thousand beasts in one day upon one occasion, says tradition; how many hands he employed to help him, tradition says not.

Hustling and bustling, with dripping jaws and lolling tongues, the white dust hovering and eddying over red-coat and dun, the men shouting, the dogs yapping, the herd came down and was halted in Langthorpe. The smith and his men, always ready for these demands on their resources, looked out from beneath the smithy roof and saw great work in hand. And the younger ones glanced at each other.

"Pity Jack Holt could find no better day to bring his cattle into Boroughbridge than the first day of the Barnaby!" said one.

"Is it Jack Holt?" said the other, staring at the knot of drovers gathered a little in advance of the halted cattle. "Then there'll be at least seven hundred of them for shoeing. He never brings less."

"Jack Holt it is," growled the smith, who had overheard the lads' talk. "And'll want his beasts off again by to-morrow night, as usual. No Barnabying for you, my youngsters, this day, and none before to-morrow's noon, however hard we go at it."

And he threw down his hammer, and strode out of the smithy and into the road to meet a great fellow, red of face, bulky of limb, who, stout ash-plant in hand, was coming to meet him. At five yards' distance from each other they exchanged nods.

"Here again, master," said the smith. "And I wish you had come at a better time. What made you bring us that lot at Barnaby Fair?"

The cattle drover turned and looked in the direction of Boroughbridge. On the bridge itself there were signs of unusual activity; folk were going to and fro as ants go hurrying about when the heap is disturbed; from across the Ure came sounds of merry-making and the noise of drum and trumpet. He turned again and smiled whimsically at the smith.

"Good neighbour!" he said, "I had forgotten all about that. First day, too, it must be, as this is a

Monday. Let's see, how many days does it go on?"

"Four, and another to wind things up and sober the tipsy ones," answered the smith, scratching his elbows and staring past the drover at the panting cattle. "And you might say one after that—to get tipsy again."

"A nice job I shall have then, to get nigh on to eight hundred cattle through Boroughbridge street to-morrow!" exclaimed the drover.

"And a nice lot of thanks you'll get for it!" said the smith. "Give the beasts a week's rest, Holt. They look far-farrened now."

The drover took off his battered hat and producing a big cotton handkerchief from the crown, wiped his bald and perspiring head.

"Can't be done, neighbour," he said. "I'm late on the road as it is. We must be off again at nightfall to-morrow."

"Just when the fair's at its thickest," observed the smith.

"Well, then, during the night, when all's quiet," said the drover. "So let's be getting to work. Same field and same watering-place, I suppose?"

The smith once more scratched his elbows and cocked a half-humorous glance at his journeymen and apprentices congregated in the door of the forge.

"Needs must be when the devil drives!" he remarked laconically. "My lads'll none bless you, Master Holt—they were off Barnabying in an hour's time."

"It shall be a shilling apiece for them to spend," said the drover. "And they'll have plenty of time to spend it when we're on the road again."

"Well," said the smith, resignedly, "get your cattle in, then."

The drovers, who had been watching the two principal parties as eagerly as the men in the smithy, saw Holt raise his stick, and immediately began to turn the cattle into the field reserved by long usage for the detention of herds while the renewing of their shoes went on. The great heaving, steaming mass of red and dun, of roan and white, struggled through the gateway and spread itself across the furrowed green, making with sure instinct for a stream of water which on the farther side of the meadow ran beneath overhanging hawthorn, just then pink and white with May blossom, to empty itself in the Ure. The drovers, glad to have a temporary rest from the dusty tramp along the high road, flung themselves down on the banks by the wayside, and looked at Holt.

"You, Jock, and you, Will, stop by the gate," said Holt. "You, Tom Robertson, and those two lads of yours, help the smith's men as they want the beasts. Don't any of you set off to the Fair yonder; you can go in your turns later on. In an hour there'll be bread and cheese and ale for all of you. Mind what I'm telling you, now. And you, Alan, come with me—there's a job I've got for you."

The young drover whom Holt addressed, a tall lad, who was sitting under the hedgerow at the

roadside, elbows propped on knees and chin resting on his upturned palms, picked up the ashplant stick which he had thrown down at his side, and rose to his feet. He was as roughly clad as any of the rest of Holt's following; his coarse garments were torn and worn, stained with mud, and liberally ornamented with the loose ends of the straw and grass which had served him many a night for bedding; his naked feet were thrust into brogues which the stones of the high road had cut and scratched until they were little protection. He was dirty enough, too, of hand and face; such a figure met nowadays upon the road would be regarded as that of a veritable young ragamuffin. But the hair, dark as a rook's feather, which cropped out from under the ragged cap, was crisp and curly and abundant; the dark eye, lighting up the dark-stained, grimy face, was alert almost to fierceness. The features were alike delicate and strong; and the hands, hard and coarse as they were, and plentifully furnished with dirt, small and shapely as a woman's, though every muscle and sinew in them showed the possession of a grip and strength of steel. And here was nothing of the drover's slouch and hurrying gait, but the erect carriage and proud swing of the patrician, and on the left side of the forehead, where the carelessly worn cap left it uncovered, was what any man used to the great game of war would instantly have recognised as a sword-scar.

Down the last stage of the hill and past the smithy, this youngster moved at the drover's side,

carelessly swinging his ashplant stick. His dark eyes were fixed on Boroughbridge, and what could be seen of the Fair then going on, but they shifted from that scene and roved ruthlessly over the prospect beyond and on either side of the town. From gazing at the far-off woods and the swelling uplands beyond the Ure, they turned to dart a swift, inquiring glance at Jack Holt, who since quitting the cattle had preserved silence.

"A moment, sir," said the drover. "I know a place where we can be as quiet as if we were in the middle of the sea and no one with us."

And he went on until coming to a cluster of houses and cottages at the foot of the bridge, he turned into an ale-house, the mistress of which set up an exclamation at the sight of him.

"Here I am again, mistress, sure enough," said Holt, in response to her greeting. "And a night's lodging I shall want of you, as usual. Is there any one in the chamber now?" he added, making for the rear of the house, through the crowd of folk who were drinking in the kitchen. "I want to write a letter for this lad of mine to carry on to York."

"Not a soul, Mr. Holt," answered the woman, bustling forward along a dark passage and opening a door. "No chance fair-comers ever come this side of the house—you know your way, Mr. Holt."

"I should by this time," replied Holt, and beckoned his companion to follow him. "Send me pen and ink, mistress, and a jug of your best ale."

The drover followed the passage for some dis-

tance, turned up a short flight of stone steps, and opening a door, motioned the youngster to precede him into a small apartment, furnished as a bedchamber, which looked out over a flower garden that ran down to the edge of the river. From the window Holt's companion could see the great bridge with its many arches, and the people crowding upon it; across the river he saw the roofs and gables of the little town. And if the window had been open he would have heard the thud of drums and the braying of trumpets and the shouts of mountebanks and cheap-jacks, and the murmur and laughter of the merrymakers. But in these days folk feared fresh air as they feared a pestilence; besides, there were genaniums and fuchsias and other plants set in bright red pots on the window-sills, and it would have been a waste of time and energy to move them, as must have been done if the window-sashes were to be thrown back.

The drover waited until the pen and ink and the jug of ale had been brought; then he carefully closed the door and turned with an air of deep respect to his companion.

"Sir!" he said in a low voice, "this is Boroughbridge. And this is where I promised to bring you—and it is where we must part."

The young man held out his hand.

"I wish I could thank you," he said. "I mean I wish I could thank you properly, Mr. Holt. But," and he smiled, glancing at the jug of ale, "I can at

any rate drink your health. Let us sit down—and then you will tell me what to do."

The drover grasped the hand offered to him and shook it warmly. He took the chair which the young man pointed out, the young man took one close by him and poured out the ale. He lifted his glass.

"I wish you the best of all things, Mr. Holt, for a true friend and an honest man!" he said. "I am your debtor for life."

The drover's hand shook a little as he lifted his glass.

"Sir!" he said. "My lord!—oh, it is safe—no one can hear us!—you are over kind. I wish—but that is no good. Sir, let us think what your lordship—well, then, what Mr. Alan is to do next."

"What I am to do next, Mr. Holt, is to get to that great kinsman of mine, whom I told you of, at York. That is what you must help me to do, for you know I never was in this part of England before."

"I can do that, sir—I know it well, though I am a Londoner born and bred, thank God! First, you cross the bridge that you see outside there, and you are then in the town of Boroughbridge, which is an important place on the Great North Road, always full of people travelling north or south, and therefore to be avoided, and to be got out of as soon as possible. Once in Boroughbridge, any man that you meet in the streets will tell you the way to Aldborough, which is on the York road. It is over a

lonely piece of country, that road, sir—you will pass but two small places. One they call Little Ouseburn; the other Green Hammerton."

"So much the better for its being lonely, Mr. Holt. And how far is it, then, to York?"

"Well, under the twenty miles, sir—some seventeen or eighteen, I think."

"Then I shall make York to-night. But these clothes—I cannot present myself at my kinsman's house in this guise!"

"I have thought of that, sir. There is in York a street called Jubbergate, where you will find many Jews, who make a trade of dealing in second-hand clothing, just as they do in Houndsditch in our own London. Go to one of these, and get him to fit you out with a plain suit—one that will attract no attention. That you can do to-night, and present yourself to-morrow morning. And—forgive me, sir, if I ask if you have money sufficient for your needs?"

"Why, Mr. Holt, I have a matter of about fifty guineas hidden away in a belt which I wear close to my skin! And I have a few more in a canvas bag which I carry round my neck. I will pay the Jew clothes-man out of the bag, and I promise you he shall not see the belt!"

The drover smiled.

"I am glad to see your lord—to see you in good spirits, Mr. Alan," he said, raising his glass again. "I hope to see you coming to your own again—in time."

The young man shook his head.

"Mr. Holt, there is nothing to come to! It is all over. Supposing I ever went back to—to where we have come from—what is there! A ruined castle; a blackened hearth; the cry of an eagle over a tower on which no banner will ever fly again; the hoot of the owl in the hall where no foot of mine will ever tread. No—no! that is all gone by—I shall never go back. All that the last Earl of Stirthes asks is the opportunity to make his way abroad and to find a new career in a new land. But wherever he goes, he will never forget Jack Holt!"

Holt grasped the hand which was once more held out to him.

"One never knows, after all," he said. "How do you know what may happen before long, sir? How do you know?"

"What I do know is the need of the moment, Jack Holt! I am proscribed, attainted—don't be surprised if you hear that a price has been set on my head. And I know more—if I am to make York by nightfall, I must go. What is this fair that is going on in Boroughbridge?—are there likely to be folk there who might recognise me in spite of my dirt and my duds? Remember, I went as far as Derby—only, by way of the other side of England."

Holt shook his head.

"I should think few people come here from the westward, sir. True, they come from far and near to this fair. It is an old institution—a fair held on the Feast of St. Barnabas. I have heard that folk come to it from the Dales, and the Wolds, and the

Moors—all manner of commodities are sold in Boroughbridge while it lasts. I saw it myself many a long year ago; it seemed to me to be like what one hears tell of our own Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield in the old days. And one thing you will see here still, which I doubt if you will find elsewhere in England. Cast your eye out of this window, sir, and from some of the houses across the bridge there, on the town side, you will see a green bush hanging—the green bush is a sign that you may buy ale, and maybe wine, within. It is a privilege that these folk have for the time being—every man may turn his house into an inn, so long as he hangs a green bush over his door. No need to go far in search of ale when Barnaby Fair is being held at Boroughbridge!"

"Well, I shall tarry at none of those places, Mr. Holt, if indeed they would admit such a scarecrow as I must look! Let me see if I have my lesson pat—first to Aldborough and the York road. Then to Little Ouseburn and Hammerton Green—no, Green Hammerton, which is doubtless the same thing. And then, I suppose, I shall be within easy distance of the city?"

"You will see the Minster towers of York, sir, long before you come to them. They rise high above the country, for the land thereabouts is flat as the top of this table."

"Then, good-bye, Jack Holt! I wonder if we shall ever meet again? If we do not, here is something that I will thank you to keep in memory of me. It is a very small thing, but it has belonged to three

of us in succession, and I took it from my brother's body when I saw him lying dead there at Culloden."

And the young Earl drew from some secret hiding-place in his bemired and ragged garments a gold pencil-case, in the head of which was set a ruby. The drover's face flushed, but he held out his hand with a frank gesture.

"Your lordship means me to have it, and I will take it!" he said. "And it shall be put in a safe place when I come to London and treasured for my eldest lad. And—God bless your lordship, and send you a good deliverance and braver days!"

Side by side they went down the stairs and along the dark passage, and out into the sunlight. At the foot of the bridge, with no more than an expressive glance exchanged between them, they parted; the drover went slowly back to his cattle and the refugee set his face towards the crowd of merrymakers.

CHAPTER II

THE BARNABY FAIR

UNTIL the railways came to drive one-half the picturesqueness of English life away, there were places along the great highways which were to the wayfarers of another age what the railway-stations are to the travellers of this. Whoever traverses the main roads of England sees to this day the little wayside towns with their great, rambling inns, their wide range of stabling, whereat folk who were going north or south, east or west, stayed for the night, or for a few hours to catch some cross-country conveyance, and in whose cobble-paved courtyards and wide streets there was always, night and day, the bustle of changing horses. In Yorkshire, along the Great North Road, there were many such towns—little more than villages in size, but in the time of this story as important as the Rugby, or the Crewe, or the Swindon of to-day. When the coaches and the post-chaises were driven off the roads by the new method of locomotion, their chief occupation went too; the roomy inns were deserted, the vast stables were given up to the rats and the spiders, the army of waiters and chambermaids, post-boys, grooms, understrappers, hangers-

on at door of stable and inn, melted away to eke out a beggarly end in the villages and to talk of the grand doings of the past. In such places as Ferrybridge, on the Aire, the inns became as ruinous as the walls of the deserted religious houses, and grass grew freely in the stable yards. Boroughbridge, on the Ure, was more fortunate in respect of the fact that it had some trade and industry of its own, and lay between York and Ripon. But whoever sees Boroughbridge to-day has little idea of what an important and busy place it was in the eighteenth century, when its inns were always full, when the guard's horn was heard all day long in the streets, and when mine host of the Grantham Arms kept a good library for the use of such guests as were obliged to abide under his roof longer than they had bargained for.

For in the eighteenth, as in the seventeenth century, Boroughbridge was not only a great place on the highroad—it was a great place on the river, and a port. Up to Boroughbridge the Ure was easily and conveniently navigable: you could bring merchandise intended for Ripon and the Western Dales up to its quay and its wharves, by small vessels sailing from York, even from Hull far away along the Humber. A few miles away eastward, where Ure and Swale meet, and become the Yorkshire Ouse, near the scene of the Battle of the White Chapter at Myton, there was abundance of water for ships of little draught; the channel was kept free up to Boroughbridge. Most of the goods which came into

that part of the country came by water to Boroughbridge; most of the produce and raw material from Wensleydale and the farther stretches beyond Ripon went by water from Boroughbridge, going down Ure and Ouse to York, which was then as important in its way as a seaport as the modern Goole, farther down the river, is now. It was this advantage of communication by water and by road that made the old Barnaby Fair of Boroughbridge a centre of attraction to folk from most parts of the Three Ridings. The dalesmen came to it to lay in stores of commodities which they could not easily procure in the fastnesses of Nidderdale and Uredale and Swaledale; they brought to it stock and produce to sell to the dealers and brokers, who came from the towns and cities of the plains and the low country. Men brought to it sheep and cattle from the wolds and the moors, taking back matters which were unobtainable in the scarcely populated stretches of Holderness or Cleveland. For all the week following the Feast of St. Barnabas the little town was seething with life and bustle and business, and the people who came a-top of coaches down Kirby Hill from the North and along the old Ermine Street from the South looked with wonder and amazement at the Yorkshire folk, old and young, men, women, and children, who crowded the long street and the great bridge, and made a passage-way difficult.

Into this scene the young Earl of Stirthes, proscribed, attainted, a wolf's head, a beggar in fortune and well-nigh in pocket, made his way in the

travel-stained garment in which as cattle-drover's man with no other name than his own Christian name of Alan, he had effected his escape from a country which was daily and hourly becoming too hot to hold him. He stared about him as he crossed the bridge and mingled with the crowds; stared, too, at the various booths whereat all manner of commodities from gay neckerchiefs to ploughboys' whiplashes were being sold, and at the stages and platforms whereon mountebanks were cutting their capers and quack doctors extolling their nostrums.

He was still young, and until the '45 he had lived a quiet and retired boyhood in the old castle at home, and his curiosity was aroused now and would fain have been satisfied by a closer examination of this unusual sight, but he remembered the eighteen miles which lay between him and York, and the danger which ever threatened him if he were recognised, and he pushed on towards the centre of the town, rounding his shoulders, sinking his head, and trying to look as like a tatterdemalion drover as he could. There was little charm in England or the sights of England for him; his one great desire was to see the cliffs of England left behind, and to find another land where some new career might open itself. Just at that moment the prospect of an open road and the sunshine of the June afternoon was more to his taste than this scene of merry-making and bargaining and the babel of men's voices rising high on every side.

But the youth in him, impulsive and hot-blooded

enough, was suddenly arrested by the thing which will brook neither denial nor contradiction. At the foot of the bridge, on the townward side, he became aware of a girl who stood watching the antics of a couple of tumblers, who were going through their performances on a stage at the entrance to the quay, which ran along the south bank of the river. She was a tall girl, as tall as himself, and a straight, and a winsome; she had hair of the true gold colour —perhaps a little too light in tint, but gold for all that—and her eyes were neither blue nor grey, but something between the two, and she was altogether a young queen amongst women, and as fair as a May morning. She stood, with slightly parted red lips, watching the tricks of the mountebanks with the innocent and unconscious enjoyment of one to whom such sights are rarities; now and then she stooped and with outstretched finger pointed out some extraordinary antic to a boy who stood at her side, timidly clutching her gown. Of her station in life the refugee could decide nothing definite; she wore a russet riding-habit and a broad-brimmed hat of felt in which a cock's feather was coquettishly set; in one hand she carried a riding-switch. Her cheeks glowed brightly beneath the tan which covered them; her ungloved hands were as tanned as her face; in everything she looked a daughter of the wind and the sun. And the youngster in the bemired garments and the disreputable brogues halted, and came to a stand, and took his fill of staring at her.

Presently he had good cause to stare at something

else. Towards the girl and the boy at her side two young men forced their way through the crowd gathered about the tumblers' platform. And those of the crowd with whom they came in contact cared little about tumblers or mountebanks or aught else for the time being, for they were two tall fellows such as one might not see in a march 'twixt Dover and Dumfries, and correspondingly built as to weight, and if they happened to tread on corn or toes in the press the owners were made aware of the fact in painful fashion. After the fashion of very big men, they seemed to see little of anything below the height of their own shoulders, and the folk made way for them as small dogs slink out of the path of some huge mastiff.

The stranger looked on these two young giants with a genuine admiration of their size. They were good-looking giants, and, unlike the generality of their sort, their legs were as straight as those of lesser men. They stood a good six feet and a half in height, and they were so much alike in the matter of their features, their flaxen hair, their blue eyes and ruddy complexions, and in the general swing and poise of their great frames, that no one could well have mistaken them for other than what they were—twins. The youngster in the cattle-drover's dress looked at them hard, and began to bethink him of certain Norse and Scandinavian legends and stories which he had read at home in a leisured boyhood—whoever these fellows were, he said to himself, they were as surely descendants of the men who

came across the wild North Sea in the old days as he was a titled earl and the fourteenth of his line. Put them into the trappings of the Viking instead of into the homely garb of homespun grey which they wore, and you would have before you the living counterparts of the men who swore by Thor and Odin and sailed their snake-headed ships anywhere and everywhere in search of adventure and new lands to conquer.

The giant twins were making their way to the girl; she caught sight of them as they pressed through the throng and nodded brightly, speaking at the same time to the boy who clutched her gown.

"Freda!" shouted one of the giants as the two came up. "Freda! come down to the water side! Two fellows are going to tilt at each other in boats —'tis a thing we have never seen the likes of. Thorkill! take the lad on thy shoulder."

The other giant lifted the child, and swung him high above the heads of the gaping crowd, while the first one, his blue eyes blazing with excitement, forged ahead, followed by the girl. And the by-standers having heard what he said—which they could scarce fail to do, seeing that, unlike most giants, he had a voice corresponding to his bulk—followed the practice of all crowds and turning their backs on the mountebanks went off in search of a new thing. And—because of the girl, and for no other reason whatever—the lad in the clouted brogues and straw-littered duds went after, unwill-

ing to go away from the golden hair and wonderful eyes.

The two big men, the girl and the child were first down at the edge of the long stone-paved quay, built where the Ure was deepest, outside the line of granaries and warehouses. They ranged themselves opposite the two boats, flat-bottomed punts, in which the men were to tilt, and the crowd ranged with them and pressed behind them, and Alan, seeing that other fellows of his presumable condition shoved and elbowed a way forward, shoved and elbowed too, and presently found himself in close proximity to the face he wanted to see. And he was looking sidelong out of his eye-corners at it when a quantity of the baser sort of the rabble, pouring pell-mell down the road from the bridge head, pressed on to the quay with such violence that the front ranks swayed before them. The child, just set down on the very edge, and at that moment held by and holding to nothing, slipped, wavered, and with a sharp cry, toppled over into the river. And after him, ashplant switch and all, went the drover lad, diving smooth and straight under him like an otter.

It was child's play to one who had swum the dark waters of his native lake from the time when he could talk, to seize the youngster as his gold locks came to the surface, and to lift him, dripping and sobbing with fright, to the eager hands stretched down from the edge of the quay. It was child's play, too, to paddle round to the point where the

quay shelved down to the river's level, and to step ashore and shake off the water. But there was no child's play in the fact that the rescuer was wet through, nor in the consciousness in his own mind that, willy-nilly, here was a delay in his journey to York. He turned a whimsical face on the folk who hurried to him, foremost the two giants and the girl, all volubly protesting their thanks.

"Here is a pretty mess!" laughed the drover lad, glancing from one face to another, and forgetting the part he ought to play in the excitement of the moment. "The next time you fall into a river, young gentleman, do it when he who rescues you has a change of dry clothes handy!"

And he shook himself again like a water-spaniel, having already had his hands nearly shaken off by the two giants, and pressed by the girl, at the touch of whose fingers he blushed hotly, whereat for some reason she blushed too. And at the warmth of her glance—which, to be sure, arose at that time from no other feeling than that of gratitude to her brother's preserver—he still further forgot the part of drover and tatterdemalion, and began to chafe and grow haughty under the pressing attentions of the crowd.

"This is all very well, good folk," said he, "but I have done naught to make you all so anxious to wring off my hands and to tread on my toes. If you want to show an admiration, which I don't merit, help me to some shop where I can get dry things, for I am as wet as if I had swum the Tweed itself."

One of the giants laid hold of the lad's shoulder.

"Come to our inn, come to the Three Greyhounds!" he vociferated. "Thorkill, bring the young one. Freda, run before and make ready! Come on, young master, and get your things off."

"Anything to get out of this crowd," said Alan, and went with him willingly. "But the thing will be to get dry ones on."

A man who had stood at the water's edge and seen the incident—a lean, hatchet-faced man, clad in rusty black clothes the worse for wear, who looked out of a sharp and suspicious eye over a wisp of dirty white neck-cloth—gazed with an inquisitive knitting of the brows after the little group, which hurried up to the street and through the people. He turned to a grey-coated farmer at his side.

"That is no cattle drover," said he. "He had the manner of a gentleman and the voice, too."

The grey-coated man nodded.

"There's queer folk comes to Boroughbridge Barnaby, master," said he. "Happen he's one of these play-actors, dressed up, like."

"Not in a cattle-drover's rags," muttered the other. And he edged his way through the crowd and went up the street in the direction of the Three Greyhounds. "He had the Scotch accent, too, in his speech," he murmured. "Maybe there is work here that is worth watching."

In an upper chamber of the Three Greyhounds, the supposed drover-lad was stripping off his wet clothes in the presence of the two mighty brothers.

And having felt the quality of their hand-grip and looked into their honest faces, he made no false delicacy about letting them see the belt which he wore about his naked body and the canvas bag which was suspended about his neck.

"And now how to get dry gear!" he said ruefully, as he picked up a blanket from the bed, and cast it about his shoulders. "Will one of you gentlemen do something for me?"

"Aught—aught!" roared the twins in unison.

"I was going to buy new clothes in York, but as this has happened why should I not buy them here? There must be some fellow in this Boroughbridge who has a plain suit of homespun, or frieze, or duffel to sell. Now, if one of you would go out and find him? Eye me over, and give him a rough idea of my size—aught that is clean will do. And tell him that he shall be paid on the nail, and bid him bring a clean shirt, for this is soaked as a dishclout and was none too clean before I went diving."

"We will pay—we will pay!" shouted the twins. "You saved our brother! You shall have a suit of the best." And the one called Thorkill darted out of the room and clattered down the street.

"I want a suit of the second or third best, and I will pay for it myself," replied Alan, and sat down wrapped in his blanket. He looked curiously at the remaining twin, who, on his part, regarded him just as curiously. "I hope the child will take no harm," he said.

"Freda will look to that," answered the giant. He

sat down on the bedside, and wiped his forehead. "I wish my father were here!" he exclaimed.

"And why?"

"That he might thank you properly. That lad is the apple of his eye! If Thorkill and Freda and I had gone home to Cransthorpe without him, it would have been his death!"

"Scarcely that, I should think, when he has two such sons—and such a daughter," he added under his breath.

"Ah, but Gamel is the delight of his life! It was all we could do to persuade him to let the lad come with us."

"Thorkill—Freda—Gamel? These are names of long ago. Where do you come from, that you have such names as these? And—no doubt your own is the like of them?"

The giant laughed, swaying his great bulk on the edge of the bed.

"My name is Olaf," he said. "Yes, old names they are, young master, and you will find them and many another like them on the grey headstones in our churchyard. We come from the edge of the moors, and the lip of the sea—the sea that our forefathers sailed over from Denmark and Norway, the moors where they lie under their green mound, to this day. We are Olaf and Thorkill Throxenby and our sister is Freda, and our little brother Gamel, and our father is Swend Throxenby, parson publican, and farmer of Cransthorpe, in the East Riding—and, as I said, I wish he were here to thank you."

"I think I am thanked enough. A parson, a publican, and a farmer! He has occupation enough, your father."

"There have been more parsons than one in the East Riding, and in the North, for that matter, who have kept an ale-house. There was Carter of Lastingham, and there was—but I have forgotten. As to the farming, Thorkill and I see to most of that. That is why we are here. We want to improve our breed of sheep, and we came to this fair to buy Wensleydales. And because ours is a place where naught goes on but the weather, we persuaded our father to let us bring the sister and the youngster with us, so that they might see York and some merrymaking. To-morrow we shall set out homeward with our sheep. At least, I shall—the others will bide a day longer, to have a look at Ripon, where there is, we hear, a mighty fine Minster, though not like that of York, and then they will catch me up on the road. And—I was thinking——"

"What?"

Olaf Throxenby eyed the figure in the blanket shrewdly.

"I was thinking that if you are in want of a job you might help me to drive my sheep," he said.

Alan gave him back a glance as shrewd as his own.

"I am a cattle drover," he answered. "I know naught of sheep."

"And as little of cattle. 'Tis no affair of mine, young master, but you are no cattle drover. Cattle

drovers use not to speak as you do, nor to behave so, either. I have met a few score of them in my time, at Driffield and Malton and Pickering and York, but never one that spoke like you, nor that carried a sword cut on his forehead. However, as I say, 'tis no affair of mine. Only——"

"Only—what?"

"Only, that as you have saved the lad's life, and laid every one of us under an obligation that we can never repay, if there is ought that Olaf, or Thorkill, or Freda Throxenby can do for you, you have but to say the word! And so would Swend Throxenby say if he were here."

Alan looked at the giant steadily; the blue eyes stared as steadily back into the dark ones.

"You are an honest man, Olaf Throxenby," said Alan at last. "What do you take me for, then, if not for what I seemed?"

"I take you for some young gentleman, who has need to go in disguise," answered Olaf, bluntly. "There are many such nowadays—I have known of more than one that was glad to take ship at Scarborough or at Burlington Quay. And if that is so——"

"Well?"

"Come with me to Cransthorpe, and you shall be as safe as ever was Robin Hood in Sherwood and Barnsdale. I say naught, and know naught, but," and he sank his voice, glancing apprehensively around the wooden walls of the chamber, "but if

all the Hanoverians 'twixt Tweed and Thames were afoot on the Wolds after you, they should never find you. Come!"

Alan stretched out a hand from beneath the blanket.

"That is the offer of a true man!" he said fervently. "Who knows that I may not take it yet? But in the meantime, I must go on to York—there is a kinsman there that I must see, and to-night. And —but here comes your brother and the clothes."

The second giant came hurrying in, followed by a little man who staggered under the weight of a great bundle tied up in a black cloth.

"I have thought of everything!" he shouted. "Clothes, and shirt, and stockings, and shoes. Show your goods, master, and let us see if I did not make a good guess at the size."

In ten minutes Alan was refitted from toe to top in a plain suit of grey homespun, and his money, taken from the bag at his neck, had chinked into the tailor's palm. He looked at the wet things which he had discarded. "What are we to do with them?" he said.

"Do me a favour, master tailor—carry them out and fling them on the midden—they will come in for some potato-bogle."

But the tailor put the soaked garments in a corner of his bundle, having an eye to profit. For even in those days they had begun to make shoddy and mungo in the little manufacturing towns on the banks of the Calder. He bade his customer good-

day, and went out of the chamber, and Alan smiled at himself in the square foot of mirror which hung on the wall. He turned to Olaf.

"Tell your brother as much as you like of what we have said," he remarked. "You are honest men, both. And now let me say good-bye, and be on my road. Who knows—we may meet again."

But Olaf laid a hand on the lad's arm.

"Wait!" he said. "You are for York?"

"That I am, and as quickly as my legs can carry me."

"No need for your own legs to carry you at all. We have horses—moor-ponies, rather—of our own in the stables here, and we brought an extra one to be at the service of whoever might help me with the Wensleydales. You shall have it—you can leave it for us at the Black Swan, in Coney Street. And if you have need of it beyond York, take it! What say you, Thorkill?"

"That he is welcome to take it for his own, and that it is but a poor return for what he has done for us," answered Thorkill.

Alan wrung their hands.

"Come down and give me your pony, then," he said. "I shall be glad of it as far as York, and there you shall find it. And——"

But just then came a tap at the door, and there was Freda, and the boy, rosy and round-eyed, and staring at the gallant knight who had rescued him from the weed and slime at the bottom. And there were gratitude and thanks-making, and Alan looked

into the girl's eyes, and the girl looked into his, and they fell in love with each other as surely and simply as daybreak slips into the full day. He went down to the stableyard uncertain of his head or of his heels.

"How long or short I may be in York, I know not," he said to Olaf as they saddled the pony. "But you shall find your beast at the inn you spoke of. And——" he paused, and looked knowingly at the elder twin.

"Yes?" said Olaf.

"In these days no man knows where his path leads. It may be that mine will lead to—Cransthorpe. You see what a good memory I have for names! And so—good-bye."

Then he rode away, decently clad and mounted, out of the inn yard, and along the York road, ignorant that other eyes than those of the brothers and the sister were watching him.

CHAPTER III

THE HEADS ON MICKLEGATE

FOR more than many a mile of the rolling land over which he rode towards York the fugitive was sore tempted to turn the pony's head and go back to Boroughbridge and take Olaf Throxenby's offer. The girl's beauty had hit him hard, for he was young and impressionable, and of an ardent temperament, which had been deepened by a solitary life and much reading of old books of chivalry and romance and love-making. And the prospect of a little rest and peace in some moorland fastness where a man might breathe in security, was alluring and tempting, for ever since his father and his brother and himself had hastened to join Prince Charles on that ill-omened August day nearly a year before, he had been harried from pillar to post, especially since the dire event of the preceding April. A peaceful and a soft life presented its charms, for father and brother were gone now, the one slain at Prestonpans in the moment of victory, the other at Culloden in the hour of defeat; and, bankrupt in fortune, and lord of nothing but an empty title, the prospect of a pastoral existence amidst beeves and sheep seemed fairer than the doubtful career

of a soldier of fortune. To be able to sit with a sound roof-tree over your head instead of having an inclement sky for your only covering; to sleep in a soft bed instead of on wet bracken or steaming heather; to eat good meat and drink sound ale instead of wandering hither and thither with an empty and aching belly and a parched tongue—that were surely better than to flee like a hunted fox, having no hole to turn into. But even as he thought of these things he remembered that he must needs dree his weird, and that the thing to do then was the thing he had set out to do—to see his kinsman at York, and get his help, and then to the Continent, as so many of his sort were doing where chance offered, there to live somehow, better or worse, until the German hog at Kensington was driven out, and the rightful king came again into his own.

So he went on in the late afternoon, through Aldborough, where once the Roman patricians had their villas and pleasure-houses, and across the sparsely-populated farming land, which lies in the angle made by Ure and Ouse, and past Marton and Dunsforth and the two Ouseburns, Great and Little, until he came to the wide stretches of moor and meadow, whereon, just a hundred and two years before, Roundhead and Cavalier had met in fierce fight at the long bank and deep ditch of Marston. And there, rising from the level strand of the Ouse, with the long line of the Wolds and the rounded head of Wilton Beacon looming behind them in the blue distance, he set eyes for the first time on the

three square towers of the great minster church of St. Peter in York, and saw beneath it the roofs and gables, the towers and spires of the wonderful city from whence Roman Emperors once ruled the then known world. A rare sight and an inspiring one it was, and calculated to bring all manner of grand thoughts into the mind of a youngster who had had the run of a library full of old books of romance and chivalry, and of ballads and monks' tales of the past, and when it revealed itself to him through a break in the line of elms by which he was jogging along, he drew rein and stared his fill at it, having never previously seen a great English cathedral. And he went on sobered and serious, as a lad of sense should have been by such a sight, marvelling much at the greatness of the English, and at the wonders of the Middle Age as they reveal themselves in stone, and he would have mooned along for many a mile in this fashion if his mount had not recalled him to the prosaic facts of life. For just as he came to Nidd, and while he was wondering what river it was that shone through the trees, the pony cast a shoe, and thereupon incontinently fell dead lame.

Alan dismounted, found signs of a previously tender foot, and wondered where, if at all, he had passed a smithy. Green Hammerton lay just behind him, but Green Hammerton was less of a roadside hamlet in those days than it is now, and he saw no use in returning there. From the copses and woods round about he saw no uprising spire or tower to

denote the presence of a village; whereupon he took the bridle over his arm, and leading the animal on to the soft grass at the roadside, set off towards York, hoping that once across the river in front, he might light upon a blacksmith. And he had scarcely come to the ford by which folk in those days passed over Nidd, when he heard the sound of a horse's hoofs behind him, and down the road from Aldborough way came a man on some sort of a horse, who, had he known it, was the fellow that had watched him come out of the water at Boroughbridge, and had followed him to the Three Greyhounds. But Alan knew nothing, and he looked up at the newcomer's face with something of welcome.

"My beast has cast a shoe, and has gone dead lame into the bargain," he said, as the man came up to the riverside. "Do you know these parts? Is there a blacksmith hereabouts? Or must I walk him into York, which still seems to be some miles away."

The man in the rusty black clothes and wisp of dirty white neckcloth looked at Alan and then at the pony.

"You will have to turn aside to Moor Monkton," he said. "There is a smith there. I am going that way—to the ferry over Ouse at Nether Poppleton. I will show you." And without further parley he walked his beast into the shallow Nidd, and let it pick its way across to the opposite bank. "It is but a mile or so out of your way," he said, when Alan had followed him. "It will make no great difference to you."

"So long as it makes a difference to the pony," said Alan. "But there is no need to delay you—tell me the way and I'll find it."

The man nodded and rising in his stirrups pointed with his stick across the hedgerows.

"Turn down the first lane to your left," said he, "and you will come to Moore Monkton. There is a smithy just outside the village."

He went off without more words, and himself presently turned into the lane which he had indicated and was lost to view behind the hawthorns and elder bushes that fringed it.

Alan trudged on with the pony hobbling behind. His head was still full of Freda Throxenby's golden hair and grey-blue eyes, and remained so until he found Moor Monkton and the smith. The smith turned out to be a garrulous and an inquisitive fellow, who must needs talk while he worked; he plied his customer with a hundred questions—had he come North or South, did he know York, had he been to Boroughbridge Barnaby, was he going far on this pony? Alan was glad to be rid of him; all the same, he was obliged to ask him the way, not wishing to retrace his steps to the highroad at the point where he had left it.

"Follow this lane to your left till you are back into the York road over against Hessay village," said the smith. "Then on by Acomb until you are in York itself, through Micklegate."

Alan went slowly along the leafy lanes, gay just then with dog-roses and May-bloom, until he saw

what he took to be Hessay on his right hand, lying amidst orchards and coppices across the highway. And there came up behind him, at a jog-trot, the man who had directed him to the smith, and gave him another searching look and a curt nod.

"I am obliged to come this way after all," said he. "The ferryboat at Poppleton has had a plank stove in, and the fellows have idled a day away before getting it out of the mud. You are for York?"

There could be but one answer to that question, and Alan gave it with a nod of the head.

"If you are a stranger in York I can help you to a lodging. I live in York myself. And I do not remember seeing you there at any time."

Alan looked at his companion and became reserved and cautious.

"I am provided with a lodging," he said.

The man glanced at him with some significance.

"I was in the yard of the Three Greyhounds at Boroughbridge when you took leave of those two sons of Anak," he remarked. "I heard them recommend you to go to the Black Swan. That is a good, an excellent inn. But——"

He paused abruptly, and looked at Alan with even more significance.

"But—what?" asked Alan.

"But scarcely the place for accommodating a cattle drover. I saw you pull the child out of the Ure."

Alan's heart leaped fiercely, and the hot blood

flushed his dark face. He turned sharply in his saddle and looked at the man in rusty black. The man was looking at him, too, out of thoughtful and crafty eyes.

"What is that to you?" demanded Alan, angrily, scarce giving himself time for reflection on what he said, and only realising the other's impertinence.

"Naught! But, young men that go about the country dressed as drover's lads do not speak as you do, nor are they able suddenly to transform themselves into soberly-attired young gentlemen who ride instead of walk."

"And again I say what is that to you?" said Alan, more angrily than ever.

"At present, naught, young master. But it might be much, later on. There are queer folk about—since Culloden."

Alan drew the pony's rein and pulled him up. And on second thoughts he stirred him again with a touch of the heel and barred the lank-faced man's way.

"Speak plainly!" he said.

The man seemed to be in no wise offended that his path was crossed. He, too, drew rein, and he looked at Alan over his horse's ears with a serious countenance in which were signs of speculation as to who this hot-tempered young cockerel might be. And when he spoke, his voice was calm.

"There could be naught much plainer than that," he said. "There are, I say, queer folk about—since Culloden."

"What have I to do with Culloden or queer folk?"

"That is as may be. All the same you came disguised into Boroughbridge. Folk that have naught to fear do not go about in the clothes that befit not their condition."

Alan edged his pony nearer to the man's horse. His temper, always hot and fiery, was up now, and his fingers itched.

"I have a mind to pull you off that ugly beast of yours and roll you in the ditch there for an interfering fellow!" he growled. "And for two pins I would do it but that you are an older man."

"It is true that I have grey hairs coming—or come," said the man coolly. "And it is equally true that you have the advantage of me in youth and strength. But in this country there is law, and there are officers to execute law. And to interfere with the lieges of the king's highway is a serious matter."

"It was you who interfered with me," retorted Alan, sulkily, and turned his pony's head towards York. "Keep yourself to yourself." And he went on. But the man came after.

"It is the fate of some to be forever misunderstood," he said. "I am one of them. I thought I might do you a service."

"When I want a service doing, I will ask for it. At present I want none—but to be left alone."

"That is all very well, here. But wait until you come into York."

Alan paused against his will, and stared hard.

"What do you mean?"

The man gave him a sharp look.

"There are heads on Micklegate Bar," he said.

Alan drew rein altogether, and his brows puckered into a frown.

"Heads?"

"I said—heads. One has been there since last year. The others have been there since the '15—thirteen years ago—when you pass through Micklegate, you will see them. They are on pikes."

Alan shook the pony's reins.

"Well—and what of that?" he said impatiently.

"Naught. But I should not like to see yours there. You are too young to lose a head on Tower Hill, or in York Castle yard. Besides, you only have one head. And you may want it."

"Why should I lose my head?"

"Folk who thrust their heads into the mouths of lions are like to lose them. And upon the heads of some people a price is set."

"There is no price set upon mine, at any rate," muttered Alan.

"How do you know that?" asked the man. And he gave the lad so sharp a glance that Alan saw that he had to deal with a person of intelligence. He drew rein, and looked the man fairly in the face.

"Speak plainly, and say what you have to say," he said. "What are you riding with me for against my will, and for whom do you take me?"

"I take you for some young Scottish gentleman who has found it advisable to cross the border.

When the Scotch ports are so closely watched there is small chance of escape from them. But we have ports here on our Yorkshire coast."

"In other words," said Alan, "you are going to dog me into York and point me out as some suspect?"

"I did not say so—rather, I said I might do you a service."

"What service can you do me?"

"I can give you a safe lodging in York to-night, and put you on your way for the coast to-morrow," answered the man.

Alan road on a little way in silence. He was disturbed and anxious; it seemed impossible to avoid suspicion.

"How can I trust you?" he exclaimed suddenly and peevishly. "I know nothing of you. If—if things were as you say, you might betray me."

"Not to the Government! I have suffered enough at their hands. Go into York, and ask the first man in the street if Parson Hood is like to betray an adherent of the right cause."

"How do I know what you mean by the right cause?" asked Alan, who was becoming diplomatic and crafty in his turn.

"No matter whether you do or not. What I say is—I can serve you to what you want."

"You don't know what I want, friend. And if you are a clergyman, I cannot buy your services. But so that you need not cherish any further suspicion of

me I will tell you this much—I am the bearer of a message to Lord Carlisle, and if you wish to do me a service, you may point out his lordship's town house, once we get to York, and then if you think proper to accept a trifle from me for your poor folk you shall have it."

"I can point out the Earl's house well enough, but you will not find him there. He is gone to Castle Howard these four or five days."

"Where is that—Castle Howard?"

"Not a long way off, on the high ground above Derwent, but too far for you to go to-night. Better lodge with me. As I say, I have no wish to see your head stuck on a pike over Micklegate or Bootham, nor to hear of your losing it on Tower Hill."

"So you are determined that I am a suspect!" growled Alan, irritated and peevish. "I wish you would leave me alone."

"I am determined that you are not what you seemed when you jumped into the Ure after the lad. And it would be an easy thing for me, when we get into York, to ask those who have the authority, to put a few questions to you."

"You threaten me?"

"I ask you to be a sensible youth. I can lodge you and set you on your way before daybreak. And a guinea or two will find as good a welcome in my pocket as in that of mine host of the Black Swan. I am a poor man since I was turned out of my living for conscience' sake."

"Aha!—I thought we should come to some question of money," said Alan, with a contemptuous laugh. "How do you know that I have any?"

"Tailors have eyes as well as their needles. I talked with the man who sold you that suit of clothes you are wearing."

"You are a villainous spy!" exclaimed Alan. "I have a great mind to break your head."

"Better do something to save your own. And I am no spy—I am a man who believes in making the most of an opportunity. And, as I say, your money will be as welcome to me as to them at the Black Swan. I will give you a good supper and a clean bed."

"And what shall I give you?" asked Alan, suspiciously.

"Five guineas will be a cheap price."

"Five devils! Do you want to rob me?"

"There spoke the Scotsman," said Hood. "You would risk your safety for a few bits of gold. You should feel thankful that I did not say ten—or twenty—or fifty."

"And if I tell you that I won't give you five pence?" demanded Alan.

"Then I shall see what His Majesty King George the Second's men have to say to you," replied Hood, cool as ever. "You had best take my offer."

Alan rode on for some distance before he spoke again. He was thinking, and thinking hard. There was no doubt that this hatchet-faced fellow had the whip hand of him. He might touch up the pony and

run away, but he had already seen that Hood's beast, sorry-looking though it was, had a turn of speed with which the pony could not compete—besides, he knew nothing of the country thereabouts; all he knew was that if he would make the East coast he must somewhere cross the Ouse and possibly go through York. He cursed the luck which had led him to stop by the mountebank's platform at Boroughbridge. But next instant he took the curse back, remembering the girl. And he wished then that he had taken Olaf Throxenby's offer. For he saw, plainly enough, that Hood was not going to be shaken off.

"I will talk to you when we get to York," he said haughtily.

"When we get to York you will be glad enough to do that," replied Hood. "It is a true saying that pride goeth before a fall."

"Give me any more of your advice, and you may have such a fall as you won't like!" said Alan. "If you do aught for me, you shall be paid—I want no proverbs thrown into the bargain."

"As you will. All I say is—you cannot do without me." And he dropped a pace or two to the rear, and became silent until they had passed by Acomb, and were come within the cottages and steadings that lay without, but close to the city walls. Then he drew up to Alan's side again, and pointed with his riding-whip. "Micklegate," he said.

In the summer twilight, now fading into night, Alan saw the road before him closed in as by a

great wall of grey—a few paces farther, and he found himself gazing at the massive bulk, the flanking towers, the yawning tunnel-like entrance of the most formidable of the York Bars, still furnished with its portcullis and its great iron-studded doors. And high above it, black dots against the pale light, he saw the things of which Hood had spoken. His unwanted companion pointed upward.

"Heads!" he said significantly. "And if I mistake not, here is somewhat to do with heads that are still on shoulders, old and young." And throwing off all ceremony, he laid hands on Alan's bridle, and turned the pony's head towards a great placard that had recently been affixed to the door of the Bar, with the Royal Arms boldly printed at its head, and the names of men printed as boldly beneath. And Alan, fascinated beyond the power to shake himself free, read what was there set forth, conscious that Hood was also reading and at the same time watching him.

There was a reward of thirty thousand pounds, a vast sum in those days, for the body of the man who called himself Charles Edward Stuart and was otherwise known as the Young Pretender. There were other rewards, varying in amount, for the bodies of his principal adherents, particulars of whose appearance were given. Many a name of peer and gentleman was advertised but there was no mention of the young Earl of Stirthes. Nor was there any description on the placard which tallied with the black hair and eyes and the sword-scarred

forehead of the lad upon whose bridle Hood kept a firm grip. And Alan laughed contemptuously.

"So you are seeking to identify me with some of those unfortunate gentlemen whose names are posted up here as if they were malefactors or vermin!" he said, bitterly. "Take your hand off my bridle!—you will find nothing about me on that paper."

"If not to-day, maybe to-morrow, or next day. All the same, I will keep my word to you. But I shall want ten guineas."

"Not ten pence!" exclaimed Alan, and shook himself free.

"Then you will spend the night in one of the cells under the Guildhall," said Hood, as they passed beneath the portcullis. "In these times travellers of your sort must have a good tale to tell to the authorities, and papers to show. And you have none."

"You said that you would not betray me!" exclaimed Alan, incautiously.

"I say nothing of betraying. All I say is that if I go to the constables and narrate in plain words what I know of you, you will not get clear of York this night, nor to-morrow, nor next day. Better make the best of the bargain I offer you."

"Where will you take me?" asked Alan, angered at his helplessness.

"To my house in the Castle Ward. And by daybreak you shall be clear of York and on the other side of Fosse."

"But this pony?—I promised to leave him at the Black Swan."

"I will see to the pony. For the present let us make a straight way home. You will give me ten guineas?"

Alan mumbled and grumbled and rode a hundred yards or so without direct reply. To his mind Hood's proposal was so much barefaced robbery; he might as well have failed him on the highway and bade him stand and deliver. But that he was in the man's power was certain. And Alan had no wish to be arrested and questioned. True, his name and description were not as yet on any of the placards offering rewards for the arrest of the Jacobite nobles and gentlemen, but a new bill on which they appeared might come at any time, might indeed be already in the hands of the authorities. And if he were questioned, he could give no account of himself that would be satisfactory to suspicious constables and Jacks-in-office. He had no papers; he had nothing to show that he was on any business; Hood would testify against him that he had come down the Scotch road to Boroughbridge disguised as a drover's lad. He was trapped, and at Hood's mercy.

"Needs must when the devil drives!" he growled.

"This way then." And having just then crossed over Ouse Bridge, Hood turned off to the right and rode towards the Castle. But ere he came to the outer walls he entered a narrow lane, and having followed it for some distance, stopped at a high

door set in a higher wall. "We will put the beast in my stable, and go in by the rear of the house," he said, and dismounting, began to feel for a key.

Alan dismounted too, and glanced around him. It was almost dark in the narrow lane, and there was not a soul near them, nor any windows looking out upon them. And a sudden tempting thought came to him, filling him with unholy joy. He edged close to his companion, at the same time doubling his right fist.

"So this is where you live and will lodge me?" he said, edging still nearer.

"This is where I live and will lodge you," answered Hood, unsuspectingly.

"Then here is to pay you for your pains!" And he drove his fist up and under Hood's chin with a force that would have felled an ox. After which, careless of whether he had killed him or not, he mounted his pony again, and riding out of the lane, turned its head in what he had already seen to be the heart of the city.

CHAPTER IV

FIDDLING DICK

THE York of that day was a vastly different city from the modern conglomeration of old and new which has spread itself over the plain through which run the rivers Ouse and Fosse. It was still a city well within its ancient walls, outside the line of which there was comparatively little of human habitation. Along one side of it, parallel with its main thoroughfare, Coney Street, the ancient way of the Kings, ran the Ouse, crossed only by the old bridge at the foot of Micklegate. There was no bridge at Lendal, there was no bridge at Skeldergate. Without the walls on the south side of the city there were a few villas and farmsteads and cottages; the woods and orchards of the Ainsty came nearly up to the old Saxon mounds on which the walls were first built. Bootham was an extra-mural village; the edge of the Forest of Galtres came up to its farmhouses and gardens. From the walls the citizen looked out on a wide-spread but sparsely populated plain; a clear day showed him the Western Hills beyond Knaresborough and Ripon; the Hambleton Hills north of the Forest; the line of the Wolds stretching from Leavening to Wilton. Looking with-

in he saw a compact and closely-streeted city, kept on the north and east side of the river within the lines of the original Roman plan. The walls began at the river bank at the edge of the land belonging to the great Abbey of St. Mary; they compassed the city by Bootham Bar and Monks' Bar to the Water Gate beyond the Castle; on the west and south sides of the Ouse they went round by Micklegate in a great sweep to Lendal. But the true, the old York, lay within that part of the city which was bounded by Ouse and Fosse, and by the walls that looked over the northward woods. Within it were the great Minster of St. Peter, and the Abbey of St. Mary, one of the only two houses north of Trent whose head wore the abbatial mitre, and the Guildhall, the Merchant Venturers' Hall, and the Castle, and the old streets, narrow and winding, with the old churches at every corner and ancient matters on every hand. And to Alan, still full of memories of the high buildings of the Canongate and the Grass-market of Edinburgh, it seemed, as he rode his borrowed pony up Coney Street, little knowing that he was pacing along the way of Roman Emperors and Saxon Kings, to be a town of little houses, for from there he got no view of aught otherwise.

There was no difficulty in finding the Black Swan. He rode the pony into the balconied yard and called for an ostler. In the light of a feebly-burning oil lamp he looked attentively at the face of the man who hurried out of the stables. The fellow seemed honest enough; nevertheless, his eyes gleamed greed-

ily when he saw the shilling which Alan pulled from the pocket of his breeches. Alan, making no offer to dismount, bent down to him.

"Hark you, friend, you can perhaps tell me what I want to know without my having to seek the information elsewhere. Do you know whether the Earl of Carlisle is in York?"

The ostler's face lighted up. That he knew and could tell. His Lordship was not in York; he was gone to Castle Howard. It was three or four days ago; maybe five.

"I am the bearer of a message for him. Tell me the way to this Castle Howard. How far away is it from York?"

It was fifteen—sixteen—perhaps seventeen miles. There were two ways. You could go along the Malton road until you came to the banks of the Derwent beneath the woods of Buttercrambe, whence you must climb out of the valley by Welburn and High Hutton. Or you could go out by Bootham Bar, near the Minster, and on towards the Forest, turning off to Castle Howard by way of Sheriff Hutton and Stittenham. One way was as good as another. But the Malton road was the one most in use; the other led over wild and lonely places.

"Another matter," said Alan, who had already made up his mind as to which road he would take, but saw no need to say aught to the ostler. "Do you know anything of two sheep-farmers, very tall men, that come from near the coast?"

"You mean Olaf and Thorkill Throxenby, of Cransthorpe! I know them—they were here yesterday, on their way to the Barnaby Fair at Boroughbridge. And if I mistake not, that is one of their ponies that your honour is riding—I thought I knew it when you came into the yard."

"That is right. They lent it to me for this journey. One or other of them will be here to-morrow or next day. Tell them," said Alan, pressing his shilling into the ostler's hand, "tell them that I have taken the pony farther, and that if I do not bring it myself to Cransthorpe I will see that it is sent there. Now for this road to Malton."

But when he had left the Black Swan behind, and had traversed two or three streets at the back of Pavement, Alan drew rein and asked his way to Bootham Bar. If Hood raised a hue and cry on him, he had no desire that they should come clattering along the Malton road in his rear; he was going the other way round. And so with scarce a glance at the mighty bulk of the high towers looming above him, he rode out of York by Bootham, and was young enough to hope fervently that he had broken Hood's neck.

But the pony was tired, and at a mile distance from the city he drew rein at a wayside inn, and gave it rest and food, eating bread and cheese and drinking ale himself the meanwhile. He asked his way there from the landlord, and went on across the lonely land until York lay far behind, and all

around him stretched Strensall Common with the midnight wind sweeping far across the heather and the furze.

In the midst of this solitude and silence Alan pulled the pony to a halt. There was no need of haste now. According to the directions which had been given him by one or other, Castle Howard could not be so very far away. But he would gain no admission to it at night, nor at any early hour of the morning. He was weary, after the many events of the day, and he decided to rest. It was not the first nor the hundredth night that he had slept out in the open.

Looking about him for a likely place wherein to bivouac Alan became aware of a glow of fire at a little distance away across the common. He drew the pony's bridle over his arm, and went slowly and cautiously towards it. The soft wind was blowing from it to him, and before he had gone far he heard the wailing notes of a violin, and one that was being played upon by no mean hand. And having an instinctive idea that there could be no great danger where there was sweet music, he went forward with less caution, and presently came to as strange a scene as he had ever looked upon, though his wanderings during the previous ten months had been wide and many.

In a saucer-shaped hollow that dipped from the level of the heath-clad moor and was protected on all sides by the gorse and furze bushes which grew at its edge, a man wrapped in a horseman's cloak

sat by the side of a crackling fire, fiddling. So far as Alan could see, he was a man approaching middle age, a tall, spare man with great masses of black hair falling about a bearded face. In the leaping flame light his face looked unusually white; long and white, too, were the hands which held the violin and the bow. And he was fiddling as if for dear life—fiddling a wild strain or rhapsody so weird and eerie that Alan, imaginative and ever superstitious enough at all times, glanced fearfully about him as if expecting to see elves and fairies and hobgoblins come out of the darkness beyond the ring of light to dance round the fiddler. For what other reason could a man sit down in the middle of a solitary moor at midnight to make such wild music? But as he looked and wondered and was half-doubtful if the man were flesh and blood or some demon, the music ceased on a sudden piercing note, and the fiddler lifted his head and threw the black hair out of his eyes with a quick movement of neck and shoulders. He turned in Alan's direction.

"Come down to the fire, friend," he called. "You will hear my fiddle just as well in this hollow as there on its lip. And summer though it be, there is a night wind on the heath."

Alan made no more ado, but pulled the pony after him down the slope. He advanced to the fire, and for a moment he and the fiddler stared at each other in silence. Then the fiddler spoke.

"Well, young friend, and what do you think?"

"That it is a queer thing to find a man playing

a fiddle at midnight in the middle of a lonely moor," replied Alan.

The fiddler laughed and laid his violin aside.

"No doubt. But a man plays his best music to the stars, in solitude. They comprehend. So does the wind."

Alan stared at him.

"I thought," he said diffidently, "I thought you were perhaps calling the fairies."

The fiddler looked up sharply and stared at Alan harder than ever.

"Aha!" he exclaimed. "What have we here? A young gentleman who talks of fairies. Aha!—I see more, now I look at your face. But let that pass for the present. Which is stranger—to find a man fiddling on the moor at midnight, or a traveller crossing it when most folk are abed?"

"I do not know the country," said Alan.

"Evidently. However, you will not sleep in a bed to-night, for there is naught but a mere village or so 'twixt here and Malton, and by the time you come there it will be full day. Where are you going, young master?"

Alan saw no harm in answering.

"I am going to a place called Castle Howard."

"A place called Castle Howard! You mean Jack Vanbrugh's fairy place—no, not fairy, for it is too solid for that—which he built for Lord Carlisle. Well, you are not far away from that—'tis but a few miles away across this common, on top of the next high ground. Will you drink?"

And he pulled out of one of the pockets of his great riding-coat a bottle, and out of another a small drinking cup of horn, ornamented by a silver band round the rim.

" 'Tis right good usquebaugh, that, my lad, and smacks of the peat and the heather amongst which it was distilled! Drink my health in a quaigh of it."

Alan took the drinking cup, and after the fashion of his race tossed off the spirit at a gulp. The fiddler watched him narrowly.

"Aha! A little straw shows which way the wind blows! That went down like mother's milk. 'Tis easy to see which side of Tweed you hail from, young sir!—no Southern can drink off a quaigh of usquebaugh without choking in his girlish weasand. I am a Scot myself, though it is forty years and more since I saw the other side of the Cheviots."

"You are a Scot!" And Alan flung himself down by the fiddler's side and gazed at him with interest.

"If to be born in a Scots town and bear an old Scots name is to be a Scot, then am I one. But if to wander about the earth from one country to another, having no abiding place in any is to be a man of all nations, then I am that, too. As I say, it is more than forty years since I set eyes on mist, moor, and loch."

"Why did you leave them?" demanded Alan, curious and anxious and suspicious all in one.

"I had ideas about such trifles as government and monarchy and rights of succession, and so forth, which matched not with the powers that were, young

man! And, though I was but a lad at the time, I preferred to carry my head about with me elsewhere than have it taken off my shoulders in Edinburgh Grassmarket. Do you understand me?"

"You were out in the '15!" said Alan, gazing at his companion with respect.

"As you no doubt have been out thirty years later! Lad—lad!—don't attempt to deceive the sharp-witted amongst these Southern folk, nor me, an old Scot. Your speech betrays you—and so do your eyes. But you are safe with me. And I ask no questions beyond one. Why to Castle Howard?"

"Because—because the Earl of Carlisle is my kinsman."

"And what of that?"

"He may—must!—help me to the Continent."

"That he may do, for he is a good gentleman, though wedded to his idol in the shape of those folk who pull the strings at Westminster and London. But Lord Carlisle is not at Castle Howard."

"They told me at York that he was gone there."

"And they told me in Sutton village, through which I came this evening, that he is not there, for the Countess and the family have gone on to Scarborough, and his Lordship has gone after them. They are gone to take the water at his newly-found Spa, and to bathe in the sea."

"Scarborough is a port," said Alan, reflectively. "I will follow him there. That is where I may get a ship."

"And—that is, if they have any particular reason

for looking out for you, as they probably have, you being, you say, a kinsman of Lord Carlisle's, and therefore a person of some consequence—that is where you may also fall into the hands of enemies. Every ship is watched that goes out of Scarborough, or out of Burlington, either. But don't be afraid—I will take you safe into Scarborough, for I am going there myself."

"Not to—escape!"

"No—to fiddle. Whatever I was thirty years ago, young gentleman, I am a poor itinerant musician now, and I earn my living by going from one fashionable resort to another, fiddling to amuse the fine and the great at their routs and assemblies. Just now I am on my way from Harrogate, a place situate, I verily believe, above the Tartarean Lake, judging from the stink of its medicinal waters, where folk are beginning to flock under the impression that those same waters will cure them of all manner of disease. I would have stayed there longer, but I had a sudden thirst of soul for a sight of the sea. And there is as good money to be made at Scarborough as at Harrogate. So I saddled my horse and came eastward without more ado."

"You have a horse?" said Alan, looking around him and seeing none.

"He is hobbled on the moor above us. A horse and a fiddle are all I own in the world. Nevertheless, there is usquebaugh in the bottle, and I have a packet of meat and bread, which is not yet dry, and you are welcome to share both. While ever he has

a crust, a mouthful of liquor, or a silver shilling, Fiddling Dick divides with a friend!"

" 'Fiddling Dick'! Is that your name?"

"It is all the name I am known by, young sir, through many counties. I had another once, but I have forgotten it. Fiddling Dick is good enough. And I am not going to ask yours, for it needs not, though you can tell it to me if you like when I have brought you safe to Scarborough, as I will. And now I am going to sleep until the sun strikes over Wilton Beacon yonder across the Derwent. Hobble your beast and follow my example."

Alan was not loth to take this good advice. He had been incessantly on the move and march since a very early hour of the previous morning, and he was dog-tired. He secured the pony by the simple process of hobbling it with its own halter, and having taken off its saddle made use of the saddle for a pillow. In five minutes he was asleep and dreaming of Freda Throxenby, and then of Parson Hood, and then of the streets of York, and of the high towers of its Minster, and then it was morning, and the sun was shining across the moor, and Fiddling Dick was standing by the ashes of the fire with his own horse and Alan's pony waiting obediently near. He pulled out his packet of meat and bread, offering it to Alan.

"Take something to stay your stomach, lad," said he, "and then we will be off. And—one word. Is there any likelihood of your being followed from York, whence I think you came?"

"There might be. At any rate," replied Alan, helping himself to the food, "I knocked down a fellow there last night that tried to detain and rob me—I may have killed him for aught I know to the contrary."

"Then we will give Malton a wide berth. And it is as long as it is short, and as short as long. We will across country to Pickering, and into Scarborough by Wykeham and Ayton. Leave all to me."

Alan was content to let the fiddler play the part of guide. He followed him over and out of the common until they came to populated country again at Sheriff Hutton, where he wondered at the ruins of the old castle of the Bulmers, and to Stittenham, in whose ancient manor-house was born John Gower who wrote the "Confessio Amantis." And from a corner of its widespread park, still being laid out and ornamented to suit the tastes of its noble owner, he saw Castle Howard, whereon, as at Blenheim and Dalkeith and Greenwich, Sir John Vanbrugh, wit, dramatist, and architect, exercised his taste and spent his patrons' money. And as he saw its vast bulk, its portentous architecture, its suggestion of wealth and power and luxury, he laughed a little bitterly. His companion glanced at him with a knowing eye.

"Anan?" he said. "You are thinking——?"

"That it is an Englishman's instinct to know on which side his bread is buttered, and to foresee which way the cat will jump," replied Alan. And he rode on, picturing a certain castle beyond the Chev-

iots from which the roof tree had been stripped, and whose walls harboured naught but desolation.

But there were plenty of matters to draw his mind away from thoughts of the past. Through a long summer's day they journeyed onward, over the Rye and the Costa to Pickering, where they gazed at the castle in which Richard I. was a prisoner of one sort and Rosamond Clifford of another, and into the valley of the Derwent at the foot of Allerston Moor, and so by Brompton and Wykeham to the two Aytons, lying on either side of the brown river which there babbles down from the sacred soil of Hackness. And in the first calm of the summer evening they saw the great castle rock of Scarborough, and at its foot the red roofs of the ancient town shining in the last rays of the westering sun.

CHAPTER V

OLD SCARBOROUGH

THERE is little resemblance between the Scarborough of to-day and the Scarborough into which Alan and the fiddler rode their tired nags on that June evening in 1746. Nowadays, Scarborough stretches thickly along its sea-front from White Nab to Scalby Mill; it is one of the most extensive and most populated of English coast resorts; it was then little more than a small town with a harbour which had a trade with other English ports and Scotch ports and with the Continent, in addition to some traffic in deep-sea fishing. Like many another place of the same sort and of similar geographical position, it had sprung up at the foot of a Norman castle which was once impregnable. Before the introduction of gunpowder, to take Scarborough Castle was an impossibility save by treachery or artifice. Out from the mainland, and only connected with it by a narrow neck of land, projects a great promontory, impossible to scale on two sides and difficult of access on the others. Here the Normans, doubtless copying the example of their forerunners, the Danes and the Norsemen, set up the great stronghold, whose keep remains to this day, a land-

mark visible for mile upon mile across the moors to the north, and the Wolds to the south, and over a far wider stretch of sea on the eastward. Far beneath it, almost hidden from the sight of whoever looked down from the curtain walls of the Castle, the little town of red walls and red roofs gradually grew up in the curve of the Castle rock. Like Dover, it was a town of narrow and steep streets, all huddled together, house hugging house, and street running into street, as if safety could only be found in close association. High above it, at the foot of the slope on which the outworks of the castle began, stood and stands the ancient parish church, elevated, as all churches near the old seaports are, that incoming and outgoing mariners might have it, and what it contained, in their thoughts as they came and went. Beyond the western bounds of the church on its height and of the harbour on the shore, Scarborough was slow in spreading. Then the folk began to build houses in what is now called Newborough, and from thence they spread up the rising ground to Westborough, and down the cliff sides which fall between St. Nicholas Street and the beach. But when Alan and Fiddling Dick rode into the place Scarborough began at that point which is now marked by the imaginary Bar, in Westborough. The squares and streets of South Cliff were then unbuilt; the valley was in its natural condition, a ravine running down from the foot of the hill, called Oliver's Mount, to the sea, on the north side of the great promontory which terminates in the Castle

Hill; a few fishermen's huts stood along the coast line between Castle Bars and Scalby; Falsgrave was a wayside hamlet on the way to the ancient village of Seamer. The town still seemed to nestle as closely as might be to its rock and its castle, dismantled and stripped though the castle had been for just upon a hundred years.

But, as Fiddling Dick pointed out to Alan, when they had ridden beneath the Bar in Westborough, and having passed down Newborough had come out upon the shore at the end of the harbour, and so gained a view of the wide sweep which lies between the eastward point of the Castle Rock and White Nab, the town was already in the first stages of a new existence. Away to the southward, a little beyond the mouth of the valley, beneath the headlands of Holbeck, there had been erected two public rooms, rough and primitive enough, wherein assembled the fashionables who came to Scarborough for the good of their health. A small matter had suddenly brought the town into request amongst such as already knew Bath, and Harrogate, and Tunbridge Wells. An old woman of Scarborough, whose custom it was to wander out of the town along the beach in the direction of Carnelian Bay, came to observe that a certain spring, which flowed out of the side of the cliff at a point near the mouth of the valley, gave evidence of possessing certain medicinal qualities, and having tried its powers upon herself and her neighbours she induced the physicians of the town to examine it. Thus came Scar-

borough Spa into existence; the invalids and the folk who longed for new nostrums ventured across the moors, and having ventured they noised abroad the fame of the water and the smoothness of the Scarborough sands. And gradually the old fishing town saw more and more strange faces arriving in its narrow streets as summer came round, and they were the faces of fashionables as well as of valetudinarians, and so assembly rooms had to be built for the company, and as Fiddling Dick observed, where you have assemblies and company you must have diversions and music, lest the devil should find more work than might be agreeable or convenient.

But Alan, staring up at the great bulk of the Castle Rock, and from it at the grey North Sea, stretching away and away in front of it and him, thought little about the small amusements of Scarborough and much about his own present needs. From gazing at the sea and the red sails in the harbour he turned to the fiddler.

"The first thing is to find my kinsman," he said, repeating his thoughts aloud.

"The first thing is to stable our beasts," said Fiddling Dick. "And that done, to stable ourselves for the night. One night beneath the stars merits another night beneath a roof. I am not as young as I was, and I shall be glad of clean sheets."

Alan made a gesture of impatience.

"But every hour is of importance," he said.

The fiddler dismounted and left his bridle reins hanging loose over his horse's neck.

"Listen to me," he said, "and hear the counsel of a wise man. Have you ever seen this great lord?"

"Never!"

"And you have no desire to reveal to the lackeys, or even to their betters at his door, what—what you have not revealed to me?"

Alan regarded him attentively.

"I don't mind revealing aught to you," he answered. "You are a true man, I think. But—not to servants, nor to any but his lordship himself."

"Then my advice is all the sounder. Do naught to-night—you can do naught, for you would never win in to my lord unless you made known who you were to some underling or other—if not a lackey, then to a secretary. But here is what we will do. To-night, or early to-morrow morning write and seal a letter for his lordship and give it to me. I shall go to the assembly rooms yonder with my violin a little before noon, and you will go with me. This Lord that we talk of knows me well, and has been pleased to notice me both here and at Harrogate—indeed, I have played to him in his own house at York. He will speak to me when he comes to the rooms to-morrow. Then I will give him your letter, and direct him to where you are standing at a certain spot which I shall show you. After that—well, I suppose you will talk."

Alan jumped off his pony.

"It is an excellent plan, and I thank you heartily!" he said. "I will do what you wish, and I will tell you who I am, and——"

"Let that wait until other things are settled—maybe I have already made a guess. Come to the Three Mariners—they know me there and we will put up under its roof for the night. To-morrow I will get me a lodging for the time I shall stay here."

He led the way along the side of the harbour, where sailors and fishermen hung about, adepts then as ever in the art of lounging against walls and posts, and ancient craft drawn high and dry, until he came to a narrow wynd or street in which there was just room for a horse to pass. Into this he turned.

"This is the sort of ginnel in which one armed man might hold back twenty," he observed, lugging his horse over the cobbles. "There is a wider approach at the back, on the landward side. But it is just as well that you should know of this."

"Why?" asked Alan, wondering at his tone.

"There are more ways than one into this house. It is as well you should know them all. Forewarned is forearmed. Not that you will come to any danger as long as I am with you. But here we are. Saw you ever such a hidden-away place as this?"

Alan looked around with curiosity as they turned the corner of the narrow wynd. More streets—if streets they could be called which were no wider than a side-passage—converged to the point at which they had arrived, all giving upon a small enclosure in which stood an old house whose timbered walls and high gables marked it as of Tudor origin. Its projecting windows overhung the streets which

hemmed it in; beyond it rose in grey limestone rocks and green heights of the Castle Hill. All about it was a scent of tar and of jute and of fish and of salt, and over its low doorway was a sign which rudely depicted three sailors in great hats and umbrella-like frocks who waved cutlasses at a fanciful vessel on a mackerel-blue sea. And by the doorway, seated on a low bench set against the wall, were two men who eyed the newcomers inquisitively as they came into view round the corner, and whose faces broke into delighted smiles as they recognised the fiddler. One of them, a short, paunchy fellow, who had discarded all apparel but his shirt and breeches, and whose head was as destitute of hair as if it had never known any, rose from the bench and stretched out a perspiring hand; the other, a great hairy man in a seaman's dress, nodded and beamed approvingly.

"Fiddling Dick, as I am a living Christian!" exclaimed the paunchy man, shaking the fiddler heartily by the hand. " 'Tis but this very day I was talking of you, my lad, and saying as how it was time we heard the scrape of your fiddle in the old town again. 'Bring Midsummer,' says I, 'and Fiddling Dick will be here, and make for the Three Mariners first,' I says. And here, sure enough, you show yourself!"

"Here sure enough, I show myself, good Master Nicholas, and my fiddle with me, and you shall have the first scrape of it before the lords and ladies of the Spa get a touch of its quality. But now to busi-

ness. Here is a young gentleman that I foregathered with on the road, who has business on the Continent and wants to take ship there."

The big man took his pipe out of his mouth and looked Alan over with a shrewd glance.

"Let him come with me," he said, "I am for Hamburg—in three or four days from now."

"Hamburg is the place he wants. He is a student, and going on his way to the university at Bonn. We will see you later, Captain—I have seen you before, but I cannot just now lay tongue to your name."

"My name is Peter Knoop. I have heard you play the fiddle in this house a score of times."

"And you shall hear me again—and new tunes—to-night. Now, Master Nicholas, this young man and myself want stabling for the beasts and lodging for ourselves. And we shall be none the worse for a hot supper after our long ride."

"You shall have it, you shall have it!—It is a long time—ever since you left us—since I heard the scrape of a bow." And the host bustled into activity as hosts did in those days, when a traveller found everybody about an inn ready to serve and oblige him. And presently Alan found the fiddler and himself in a clean chamber with towels and water, and through the latticed window there floated in the ingratiating smell of freshly caught fish frying in the pan on the kitchen fire beneath. He began to understand why Englishmen made so much of taverns and tavern life, and why they figured so

largely in the romances and the plays and the tales of England as England was. He turned to the fiddler with one of the smiles which rarely lighted up his dark face.

"I am glad I met with you," he said. "And—I promised to tell you who I am."

"H-ssh!" And Fiddling Dick, who had been sousing his head and face in cold water, closed the lattice and held up a warning finger. "These old houses are of no great height," he said, "and you never know who may be passing to and fro beneath. So you wish to give me your confidence?" he added, in a low voice, moving away to the centre of the chamber.

"It is due to you."

"Umph!—I am not sure that I have done aught to deserve it. But maybe there is naught to tell that I do not know."

Alan stared at him. The fiddler cast aside his towel.

"Look here!" And he drew from an inner pocket a much-folded sheet of paper and handed it to his companion. "You will not go far about the country unrecognised, when that is in full circulation," he said, with a nod of the head.

Alan sat down on the side of one of the two beds with which the chamber was furnished and spread the paper out with eager fingers. And at the first glance he knew that he was wolf's head and outlaw indeed—there was money waiting for whoever took and delivered him. He rapidly glanced the paper

over and looked up at the fiddler, who was arranging his wild head of hair with a pocket-comb.

"Where got you this?" he asked.

"In Knaresborough, as I came through it from Harrogate yesterday. I chanced across a messenger who was going north with similar stuff and begged it of him for a curiosity."

"Why should I be worth a thousand pounds to them?" exclaimed Alan bitterly. "I am not worth a thousand pence!"

"There are two reasons. One, you and yours—yours, of course, you being too young—have expended not one thousand but a great many thousands on—the other side."

And he looked at Alan and smiled, half-grimacingly, half-sadly. After which he sighed deeply.

"It is true that we have given everything we had to—the other side. Down to our last penny we have given it—and would again. I am no better than a beggar!" said Alan.

"You must be punished for squandering your fortunes so unworthily. That is what the folk who want you say. And you see they are willing to give a thousand pounds so that they may have the pleasure of taking your head off."

"What good will that do them?"

"You are the last of your race. They do not want any more of you. They have a policy. They want to rid the ground of heather and thistle and plant tulips and guelder roses on it—where they won't grow."

"They want to exterminate us?"

"To the last man—especially now that your money is gone. What use is a penniless Scots nobleman, however ancient his ancestry? Far better replace him by a fat London citizen who can pay handsomely for a patent of nobility!"

"You speak bitterly," said Alan, looking at the older man with some wonder.

"I have reason. But what that reason is, I tell to no man. Let us go to supper. And remember, lad—you see how free I am with you!—you are safe for this night at any rate."

Alan hesitated as the fiddler turned to the chamber door. He looked at his companion half-wistfully.

"I wish you would tell me who you are," he said. "I have not so many friends that I can afford to have one whose name I do not know."

Fiddling Dick paused too, and laid a hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Lad!" he said, "I came near to speaking the truth when I said on yonder heath last night that I had forgotten my name. Truth is, I have tried to forget it—I could rake it up out of some recess in the cave of my memory, but what would it profit? You say you are the last of your house—so am I the last of my race. I earn an honest living with the one talent I possess, and I am content. What need to shed useless tears over a lost cause—as ours is?"

Alan's eye flashed.

"Lost!" he exclaimed.

"Lost, lad, lost! None of that line will ever again

sit in the seat of kings. And when the oak falls it brings down many a less noble tree with it—to say naught of the underwoods. Come to supper and be merry."

But Alan went to meat with a heavy heart. His fathers had given everything for the Royal House, and here was the end—the rightful sovereign was a wanderer, and he himself was an outcast with a price on his head. The present was hopeless; the future dark. And though, being young and well in body, he ate with appetite, he could summon up no merriment, and when the fiddler, supper over, took his violin and went into the parlour to amuse a highly-expectant company hastily gathered by John Nicholas, he excused himself and went out on the harbour-side, a prey to gloomy thoughts. And to him there, out of the gloom, coming from a vessel that lay by the quay, came the great man, Peter Knoop. He paused by the lad's side.

"We are for Hamburg on the third day," he said, meaningly. "I will take you, young gentleman —I have taken folk like you before. And—a piece of advice to you. Until we sail keep your ears unstopped and your eyes skinned. The ports are well watched. Now I am for a tune of your friend's fiddle—'tis a rare performer, that Fiddling Dick!"

And he went off in the darkness, leaving the lad lonelier than ever.

CHAPTER VI

A NOBLE KINSMAN

WHO it was that first set up the fashion of going to the seaside for rest and refreshment of body no historian has ever told us. English folk, having the example of the Romans before them, went to certain inland places to bathe in mineral waters—and in time to drink them—long before they betook themselves to the coast. The captivity of Mary Queen of Scots at Sheffield and at Wingfield Manor was relieved by the courtesy of her gaoler, Shrewsbury, in periodical visits to Buxton, whose waters were even then famous for their curative properties in cases of gout. Everybody of note went, of course, to Bath, though the beds which had to be occupied on the way there were, according to Pepys, of a lousy nature. Pepys, who loved to poke his long nose wherever the quality were found, went there himself and had good entertainment and spent much money; John Evelyn, too, went there, and was horrified by the rocks near the neighbouring Bristol. Bath, indeed, held the honours until Tunbridge Wells was discovered as a place of resort; Harrogate was of a later generation, and if Smollett's account of it is to be trusted was at first

as outlandish a spot as any lover of the primitive could desire. But when sea-bathing began it is somewhat difficult to find out. One does not hear of Henry the Eighth or of Charles the First setting any fashion in this respect. It is, however, very certain that George the Third did, for Fanny Burney tells us that when she and the rest of the courtiers were with him at Weymouth, in 1789, the good king bathed in the sea, and with great success, and was accompanied into the waves by a machine filled with fiddlers who played the National Anthem as the royal body was plunged in the surf. Company—to wit, folk of degree who came from afar—had begun to assemble at Scarborough long before Farmer George bathed with musical accompaniment at Weymouth. Whether people were first attracted to Scarborough by Mother Farrow's discovery of the medicinal water which still flows at the northern end of the Spa, or by a desire to dip in the sea, are questions into which one need not go, but it is certain that when Squire Bramble journeyed all the way from his native Gloucestershire to the Yorkshire seaport and was there dragged out of the surf by his faithful henchman, Humphrey Clinker, sea-bathing was in full force amongst the well-to-do of the nation, and there were tilted carts, in which to undress and dress again, and fat fishwives to assist in carrying operations to a proper finish. According to the shoemaker in Sheridan's comedy, "A Trip to Scarborough," people of quality had been coming to the town ever since the mid-

dle of that century—the eighteenth—and as he had made footgear for half of them he considered himself as good a judge of a shoe as my Lord Foppington himself. Naturally, shoemakers and stocking makers and tailors and jewellers and peruquiers and sempstresses followed where fashion led, and the advent of the Sir Tunbelly Clumseys, the Tom Fashions, and the Colonel Townleys meant money to the town. Outside the old-world streets and the smell of sea and fish, a new Scarborough gradually arose, with inns and taverns of some ambition, and in time lodging-houses and places of resort came into evidence, and the wondering fisher-folk looked in amazement on men and women who wore hoops and full-skirted coats and powder and patches, made great play with jewelled snuff-box and painted fan, and were experts

"In the nice conduct of a clouded cane."

It was, therefore, into some sort of a passable imitation of far-off London that Alan followed Fiddling Dick on the morning which succeeded their arrival at the Three Mariners. Truly the scene was primitive enough—more primitive than Staithes or Runswick, farther up the coast, are at this day. There were the roughest of machines, furnished with canvas-covered tilts, for folk to bathe out of; there were the roughest and readiest of women, much more accustomed to handling herring than fine ladies, to attend to the bathers. The two assembly rooms were little better than wooden sheds, set on piles under the shelter of the cliff on which the

palatial Spa now stands; near one of them was the spring of mineral water which Mistress Farrow discovered, on one of her early morning walks, and found to be good for the stomach. And in and about the two rooms, and on the firm stretch of sand in front, moved and circled a numerous company of folk, who, after the fashion of holiday-making companies in all ages, stared and ogled, and simpered and whispered, and criticised, and were there for the main purpose of seeing and being seen.

"You will observe that these folk are of three classes," said the fiddler, as he and Alan drew near the centre of gaiety. "There are your London folk, who are always easily told by the cut of their clothes, the affectation of their manners, and their insolence of bearing. They say 'Lard' instead of Lord, and 'manstrous' instead of monstrous; they ask 'Gad' to 'jedge' them, and when they want to be forcible they desire to be ratted or to have their vitals stapped. There are your country knights, who know naught of London, but much of the justice-room, and whose wives and daughters think it a brave thing to have a week at York Races, with a concert or two in my Lord Burlington's new music-chamber, or a fortnight at Scarborough, where they can see Lord Fop's new coat and Lady Modeley's latest gown. Their men folk still swear by God's Life and by the Mass; their wives are not above swearing by the Sacred Wounds or the signs of the Zodiac. And there are the respectable merchant citizens of York, and Leeds, who have lately

contracted this habit of seasiding; you may know them by their countenances, which have caught a reflection from the gold they are so fond of, and by their wives, who do naught but watch the fine madames."

"Amongst such fine folk I shall look like a barn-door fowl that has strayed amongst peacocks," said Alan.

"Why, 'tis true that most of them wear their bravest raiment whenever there is the opportunity to do so! But there are odd birds even in this flock. At all these resorts—and I and my fiddle know most of them—you will always find fowl that you can't classify. There is your well-dressed fellow who comes with all he has on his back, a guinea, maybe, in his pocket, and a portmanteau packed with straw and stones to make the landladies think it contains a valuable wardrobe. He has come to pick up what he can get, and if he has any luck he will in time throw the stones and the straw away, and replace them with new shirts and a new coat or so. And there are others of a nondescript sort, who, maybe, really come to the place, not to stare and be stared at, but because they love the sea and the smell of it, and the fresh air and different life. You will pass as one of those. And now for our plans—I am going to fiddle a tune or two before this first assembly-room; do you walk to yonder black rock which juts out of the sand and take your seat there, but keep your eye on me. You will see that my Lord of Carlisle will honour me with a word or two. I shall give

him your note, and direct him to you. The rest I must leave."

"Do you see aught of him?" asked Alan, who had never seen his kinsman. "If so, point him out to me."

"I see naught of him as yet. In past years when I have seen his Lordship here, it has generally been about noon. It is not yet that—wait patiently but keep your eye turned my way. And now give me a careless nod and go on, as if you had talked with me casually—I see many of my old patrons and acquaintances have noticed my arrival. Remember, I am naught but Fiddling Dick."

Alan took the hint, and giving his companion a nod, strolled slowly forward past the assembly-rooms to the point of rock which the fiddler indicated. He took his seat there and looked about him, and finding that no one, after a glance or two, paid any particular attention to his presence, he occupied himself in watching Fiddling Dick, around whom a considerable number of the company had already gathered. It was evident that he was a great favourite, for many of the exquisites and fashionables spoke to him, and a circle was quickly formed around the spot on which he took his stand, and for a few minutes there was much laughter and gay interchange of greetings and remarks. But at the first scrape of the bow across the strings, the buzz of talk and ripples of laughter died away, and the fiddler played to the accompaniment of the murmur of waves, looking softly on the shelving sea.

During a wakeful night Alan had wondered much who this strange man, so strangely met, could be. There was about him an air of mystery and romance which excited the young refugee's ardent imagination—he must, thought Alan, be, like himself, some Scottish nobleman whom the ill-fortunes of the '15 had driven far from hearth and home. But whatever he was, he was a true and consummate master of his art, and the lad listened spellbound as the violin gave forth its music. The fiddler was playing the strange air which Alan had heard on the lonely moor at midnight; once more it so gripped him that he half-forgot his troubles and where he was.

But he had not forgotten that he was to keep his eye on his friend, and he presently realised that the critical moment was at hand. In the midst of the applause which followed Fiddling Dick's first performance there walked up to the fiddler a tall and stately gentleman, soberly habited in black, and only distinguished by the natural dignity of his carriage, who greeted him with a courtesy in which there was nothing of condescension, and entered into conversation with him. The crowd, whispering and nodding, drew a little aside as Fiddling Dick and the newcomer talked, and Alan, having a clear view, saw his note pass from the fiddler to the stranger. His heart leapt at the sight; he had no claim on this powerful nobleman beyond that of blood-relationship, and while the great man was of one, and that the dominant party, he was of another, and that its beaten opponents.

The gentleman walked a little apart; the company closed in again, and again Fiddling Dick laid his violin to his shoulder. And Alan watched the arbiter of his present fortune. Would he read the letter then, would he come to him, speak to him? Or would he treat him as what, in the Hanoverian opinion, he was—rebel and refugee, with a price set on his head?

The gentleman made no show of reading the letter at that moment. He spoke to one here, to another there, he stopped at this group, he passed by that; finally he disappeared within one of the assembly-rooms, where he remained for some time. And when he came out again, he walked slowly but deliberately in Alan's direction, and the lad knew that his keen eyes were fixed steadily upon him. He felt his cheeks flush beneath that penetrating gaze, but he looked steadily back at the man who approached him.

There was no one near the rock on which Alan was seated—the folk had all gathered about Fiddling Dick. He rose as the Earl approached, feeling doubtful and confused. And the Earl came up, still watching him narrowly, and spoke, still walking slowly onward.

"Follow me, sir, to some quieter place where we can talk," he said, and led the way along the sands. "Follow at some little distance—it may be well not to be observed."

His voice was quiet, grave, and not unkindly, and

the younger man, hungry for sympathy, was quick to recognise a note of interest and concern in it. A new feeling of hope sprang up within him; there was something in the presence of the famous statesman that inspired confidence; of late, all the men of his own rank with whom he had consorted had been like himself, broken in fortune and in desperate case.

He waited until Lord Carlisle had gone a little way along the strand, and then he followed him. The tall figure in front wandered slowly onward and finally turned into a cove which was hidden by a projecting cliff from the sight of the company gathered about Fiddling Dick. And there, when Alan, too, turned the corner, he found his kinsman standing with outstretched hand and a look of anxiety on his face.

Lord Carlisle gave the young man's hand a cordial pressure, gazing at him earnestly.

"I am sorry that we should meet under these circumstances," he said in a tone of great concern. "I never met your father but once, and that is many years ago, but I recognise your likeness to him. And your mother was my kinswoman."

"My mother was of your house—and she was the only Englishwoman that ever married into ours," replied Alan bluntly.

The Earl smiled. He recognised the proud spirit of the Scot.

"Yes—I remember something of that," he said. "If I mistake not, your grandmother made a great

to do about the marriage. And now that I begin to think of these things, all you Stirthes carry a certain birthmark. Is it not so?"

For answer, Alan pulled up the sleeve of his left arm and pushed back the shirt from the bare skin. There, between the wrist and the elbow, on the white of the inner arm was a crimson cross, so vivid and startling in its colour that it looked as if it had been freshly painted. Lord Carlisle stared at it in amazement.

"I have never seen that before!" he exclaimed. "I knew that your father carried it, but I did not know him well enough to ask him to show it to me."

"No Stirthes has ever been without it, lad or lass, for twelve generations," said Alan proudly, as he drew down his sleeve.

The Earl nodded, and pointed to a rock within the cove.

"Let us sit down and talk," he said. He took a seat and again looked earnestly at his companion.

"You will forgive me for speaking frankly and openly," he continued. "I gather that you have lost —all."

"All!" replied Alan. "All! House—land—money —all is gone! And don't think that I repine or complain—we would lose it all again. I am only stating the fact."

"It is facts that we have to deal with. I am much in the dark, for kinsmen by marriage though we were, I heard little of your father in recent years. Tell me what happened?"

Alan looked out across the glittering sea and let his mind go back to the August day of the previous year, when the Stuart prospects had seemed just as glittering as the dancing waves. And unconsciously he sighed heavily.

"Tell me nothing that will distress you," said the Earl. "I know, of course, what you have lost."

"I will tell you everything—it is a common tale," said Alan. "And indeed, there is little to tell. When his Maj—when Charles Edward landed at Moidart, we at Stirthes soon had the news of it. And my father said we must go, and we went there and then."

"Your father—and yourself?"

"My father, my brother, and myself. We took what men we could—there were fifteen of us in all. My father found means to raise some ready money —we took that with us for the cause. We were at Glenfinnan by the time the standard was raised; then we went on to Edinburgh with the other folk who had hastened to join as we had. My father raised more money there in Edinburgh, having more time to do it in, and he took it to Charles at Holyrood. We were with him at Holyrood until we moved out to Prestonpans, and gave battle to the Hanoverians. That was where we beat them. It was there that my father was killed. And so, of course, my brother became Earl of Stirthes."

"And doubtless succeeded to your father's intense devotion to a lost cause, poor lad!" said Lord Carlisle.

"We believed it a winning cause—as it was, and is, a righteous cause," said Alan. "Our father's last words to us were a command to live for it, and, if need be, to die for it. And we obeyed him with the heartiest of wills."

"Until one is dead and the other an outcast!" thought the Earl. But he said nothing of what he thought, and only asked the lad to tell him more.

"There is little to tell," answered Alan. "All the world knows, I think, what followed. We kept our father's behest and stood by our sovereign. We were with him on the march into England—if some of us could have had our way with him he would never have turned back. But turn back he did, at Derby, and we with him. Then came the winter, and then, in spring, Culloden. And there my brother fell as my father had fallen—and it would have been better that I had fallen with him! And that is all."

"Surely there is more! What of your own doings since then? What of the last three months?"

"There is naught worth telling of that. At least, my tale is no different from that which many another could tell. Hunted like vermin—starved like crows in a hard winter—hiding amongst the rocks—sleeping in the heather—what need to tell of that? Then at last I got across the Border, coming into England as a cattle-drover's lad, and so here."

"But why here?"

"Because every port in Scotland is watched, and I am too well known. And I believe that your Lordship, being my kinsman, would help me."

"And so I will, and gladly, if I can see the way. But—in what way? For you must bear in mind that you are proscribed—nay, there is even a price set on your head! What had you in mind?"

"Naught, but to get out of this country to the Continent, to make a new start. I thought that your Lordship might give me letters to some folk abroad who might give me a chance in some way."

Lord Carlisle tapped the ferule of his cane upon the rock at his feet.

"We must have the attainder taken off you!" he said, musingly. "You may go to the Continent for a time, till the storm is over, but you are too young to lose your head on Tower Hill or anywhere else. And there have been plenty of examples and punishments—there must be mercy and pardon."

"I want neither mercy nor pardon from usurpers and murderers!" said Alan, stoutly.

"So you feel at present, being still sore and hurt, and being also young and enthusiastic. But one cannot live for ever on a great ideal, nor on the romance of a lost cause. For lost it is, my poor boy! No Stuart will ever again come to the throne."

Alan's face grew darker, and he shook his head.

"That is as it may be," he muttered. "You are an older man than I, and I would not be disrespectful, but not even you can say that for a certainty. At any rate while there is a Stuart left, he or she is rightful monarch by all the laws of God and man. And I am not going to forswear myself! Charles' man I am, and Charles' man I will be until I die."

The elder man sighed. He knew the mind and the temper of the young and chivalrous who had gathered around Charles Edward; he knew, too, how useless it was to argue with them. And yet, under the circumstances, there was naught to do but argue.

"When a cause is lost those who adhered to it are absolved by their allegiance," he said. "Reflect upon that."

"Not for one moment. No righteous cause is ever lost. We have God on our side," retorted Alan, changing in one mouthful from indignant assertion to simple and child-like faith in principle, and then as quickly to scornful indignation. "Am I to see the Lord's Anointed in the little German at Kensington? If all England calls him King, that does not make him so."

"You might as well try to turn back yonder incoming tide as to force the present dynasty from the throne," said Lord Carlisle. "Be advised by me. You have done your best as an honourable man, and the cause you fought and bled for is beaten. Make your peace with the victors. It is the sensible conclusion to all warfare, to all difference. Listen!"—and he brought into his speech all the persuasiveness of the statesman and man of affairs—"You have life before you, you have talents, capabilities—do not throw them away on a chimera. Write a memorial and let me present it. Point out that you are young, that you were carried away by your enthusiasm, that you felt yourself bound to follow where your father led, and that——"

Alan stopped the Earl with a glance.

"You are asking me to say what is not true!" he answered indignantly. "I could not say those things. I want no pardon and no mercy. If they take me, they can have my head. It is all I have left, or nearly all. And I won't detain your Lordship any longer."

He was moving away with a bow, but the Earl laid a hand on his arm.

"Do not be too hasty or rash," he said. "I was thinking for your good, advising for your good."

"But on terms which I will never accept! And so why waste your Lordship's time?"

"But where will you go? What will you do?" exclaimed the Earl in obvious distress and perplexity.

"There is a man here named Peter Knoop who sails for Hamburg in two or three days," answered Alan. "He has promised me passage. I shall find others of my sort across there in the Low Countries."

"But—how live? I am told that most refugees starve."

Alan moved off.

"I had rather starve and keep my honour than forswear myself and eat the usurper's bread," he said. "Farewell, my lord!"

And he went, with his nose in the air and his hands tightly clenched, in the direction of the harbour. And Lord Carlisle let him go without further

effort to detain him. But presently he walked up to Fiddling Dick, just then resting from his labours.

"Master Fiddler," he said, with a smile, "our young friend has the pride of Lucifer. He is not like to bow the knee readily in the house of Rimmon. And so—what do you advise?"

"That your good lordship should help him in spite of himself."

"And so I will. He talks of sailing with one Knoop. How soon can that be?"

"Not for four days."

"Then go after him, and for four days put him where he can't be found."

And with another smile and a nod the great man strolled away in another direction.

CHAPTER VII

THROXENBY'S TOFT

PETER KNOOP'S ship lay in peace at the quay-side, and Peter Knoop himself stood with out-stretched legs on the harbour wall high above it, watching his men unload hold and deck of the cargo of wooden logs which he had carried across the North Sea from the great forests of Sweden and Denmark. There was a wholesome scent of clean wood mingling with the smell of the sea, and the odours of tar and pitch, and Alan, catching it full in his nostrils as he came along, looked out suddenly across the dancing waves in front with a great longing to be on them and away from the life which he had lived of late. He thought of the old Viking days, and was inclined to wonder if he had not been born out of due time, for in his mood of the moment it would have suited him to go sailing wherever fancy prompted, with a good sword and stout shield in hand, and dreams in his head of carrying off the treasures of the East and marrying a Caliph's princess-daughter. He came up to Peter Knoop and stood at his side for a while in silence, staring down at the ship and the sailors. And Peter Knoop turned at last and looked at him, half whimsically.

"Well, young gentleman!" said he. "And what do you think of?"

"I am thinking that I do not care how soon you sail. To be on the sea will suit me much better than to be on land."

Peter Knoop brought his sturdy legs together and folded his arms.

"No doubt. But you are forgetting what I told you last night. It is not well to show yourself too openly hereabouts."

Alan made a gesture of impatience.

"I am tired of being a rat that is harried from one hole to another!" he said. "Even moles come to the surface now and then."

Peter Knoop looked at him out of the corner of the shrewd eyes which were half hidden under his shaggy fur cap.

"Come down to my cabin," he said. "That is a place in which no man sets foot except by my leave." And he led the way across the sloping plank by which his men were bringing up the pine logs, and over the crowded deck and down a steep gangway into the narrow quarters in which a skipper of those days spent a considerable portion of his existence. "Here is the right stuff," he said, setting out a quaintly-shaped vessel of yellow-green glass, mounted in silver about its thickly-moulded neck. "It is good Nantz. And it should find favour with you."

"Why should it find favour with me?" asked Alan, half surlily.

"Because it never paid aught to the Hanoverian. Try it. There never was a Scotsman yet that could not take off his morning dram, and I'll warrant that you have not yet put nose to yours. And—here is another of you!"

Fiddling Dick showed his face at the cabin door, came in, and closed the door behind him. As the result of a silent pantomime between himself and Knoop he helped himself to the contents of the bottle, drank, and nodded. Then he glanced at Alan, who sat, hands thrust in pockets, on a locker, moody enough.

"The question is," said he, speaking as calmly as if they were continuing rather than beginning a conversation, "the question is, good friend Knoop, where this young gentleman is to be put until your ship sails. For it would never do to keep him here aboard—any more," he continued, turning again to Alan, "than it would have done for the person to whom you have been speaking to take you into his house for the time being."

Alan made no comment. His notions about hospitality had been somewhat hurt; he had thought that his kinsman would at least have offered him shelter.

"The law about harbouring is strict," continued the fiddler. "And men who sit in high places must not go against it. To stay hanging about here in Scarborough for four days is dangerous. Where, then, is there a refuge?"

Alan suddenly flashed on both a look of assurance.

"I know of folk who will not be afraid to harbour me," he exclaimed. "Hereabouts, somewhere on this coast, live the folk who lent me the pony. There is a reason why they will take me in, and I will go to them. Tell me," he continued, turning to Knoop, "tell me when you sail, and at what hour, and I will be back here."

"To-day is Wednesday," answered Knoop. "We shall go out of Scarborough Harbour at high water on Sunday night—two hours before midnight, or thereabouts."

Alan rose with alacrity.

"I shall be here," he said. Then recollecting a matter of which he had thought on his way to the harbour, he clapped a hand to the pocket in which he had early that morning placed some gold. "Let me pay for my passage now," he added.

Peter Knoop shook his head.

"No need," said he. "We can talk of that later. And—there will be no passage money to pay. You are not the first I have carried over for love."

Alan stared at the big man.

"For love?"

"Well, then, out of gratitude—which is the same thing. Years ago, one of your sort did me a good turn, for which I could then make no recompense. I am trying to pay off the debt. So no more talk of that. Take him away, fiddler, and settle between yourselves where you and I are to meet him Sunday night after dark. In the meantime, young gentleman, keep your eyes and your ears open."

And he pushed them out of the cabin and from the deck waved a big hand to them as they set out along the quay.

"That is a good idea," said Fiddling Dick. "Where is this place that you will go to?"

Alan had no idea of the locality. He was not sure if it was north or south. But it was between the moors and the sea, and it was called Cransthorpe.

"Easy enough to find out all about that without committing one's self," said the fiddler. "Now, then to be about it. Do you turn along the beach there until you come to near the Spa, where you will see a valley turning inland—wait there amongst the trees until I bring the pony. We came into Scarborough through Westborough and the Bar, but you must not go out that way."

"Why?" demanded Alan, who was in the mood to face all and any opposition.

"Lest folk whose fingers are itching to handle that thousand pounds should be riding into the town from York. I mistrust that parson fellow that you told me of. Go along the beach and wait. There are no folk about now, for the company has sharpened its appetite and gone to dinner."

And he turned into the narrow alley which led off the harbour side to the Three Mariners while Alan went slowly back along the now-deserted sands. He found the entrance to the valley of which the fiddler had told him, and turning into it sat down on the bank amongst the bushes. There was at that time no road in that valley; a narrow stream ran

through it to the sea; by the side of the stream a rough bridle-path wound along beneath the trees to the foot of the high ground without the town. And, as Fiddling Dick had foretold, there was no one about, for the pleasure-making folk, who in those days numbered no more than a hundred or so, had gone to their lodgings, and their inns, for the early dinner which was then the fashion.

An hour passed before the fiddler came to him with the pony. He dismounted and pointed to a bag which hung from the saddle.

"There is food and drink in there," he said. "You can make an outdoor repast when you are clear of Scarborough. As to Cransthorpe, I have found out where it is, without letting anyone know that I wanted news of it. It is a small place over against Flamborough, and a little inland. What is more, I have found out how to reach it. Follow this bridle track through the valley till you come to the end of these woods. There you will find a road having on its right that great hill yonder, wherefrom, they say, Oliver Cromwell discharged his ordnance at the Castle. This road will lead you on to the cliffs, and you will follow it for a good many miles, past Cayton, and Lebberston, and Gristhorpe, until you come over against Filey. Do not turn either right or left, but go forward some miles farther until you see Flamborough Head running out into the sea—you will know it by a mighty dyke that cuts across it, and by an old Danish work—tower or pharos or some such thing—that stands near the

point. Then turn inland, as if you were making for the Wolds, and ask your way again. That is all. Ah, except this—come back on Sunday in such fashion that you will be here, at this very spot, after dark. I have thought of a good plan. You shall not go into the town at all, but be taken off to Peter Knoop's vessel by a boat from the beach below. And now, lad, be off, and a safe jaunt to you! You are sure of these folk that you are going to seek?"

"As sure as that you are a good and generous friend!" said Alan heartily, shaking the fiddler's hand.

"Then you have naught to fear if you do but get to them in safety and return from them in safety. Now mount and ride!—not that you can make any great speed. But the sooner you are out of Scarborough the better."

With a reassuring smile and a wave of the hand Fiddling Dick turned off towards the beach, and Alan, mounting the pony, began his journey along the rough track which followed the stream. Now that he was once more doing something that savoured of activity, his hope and confidence returned; it was only the sense of helplessness and inaction that threw him into moods of despair. And as he remembered that at the end of this journey he would once more set eyes on Freda his heart began to dance, and as he passed beneath the overhanging trees he broke into a whistle for the first time for many a long day.

It took but little time to pass out of the bridle-path into the road of which the fiddler had spoken. There he found himself at the foot of a great hill-side, now covered with streets and squares and schools and churches, but then given up to sheep and solitude, and to innumerable rabbits who had their colonies in the short-cropped grass and half-sandy soil. High above him rose the almost dome-like configuration of the hill now called Oliver's Mount, wherefrom, it is said, the Parliamentarian forces bombarded the Castle; on his left the land stretched away to the edge of the cliffs in undulating surfaces long since obscured by the villas and hotels of fashionable Scarborough. And at last, gaining the head of the long rise near the seaward shoulder of the great hill, he looked over a mighty panorama of sea and land and saw spread out before him that great dip between Moors and Wolds which is called The Cars and has for its southern line of natural fortification the long stretch of hills, covered with camps and entrenchments, that runs from Wintringham on the west to above Willesby on the east. He pulled his beast to a halt at the sight and for ten minutes sat staring alternately at the great North Sea on one hand and the rolling country on the other, for he had read much in old books in his younger days, and he knew that the half-wild warriors had come in their savage ships across these great waters, had settled on these very acres, and that their bones lay to that day beneath the tumuli and the burrows which showed on every side.

And being book-learned, the lad was able to go back in his mind's eye to a day long previous to that of the Dane and the Norseman. He knew that all along that coast, on the high ground above the encroaching sea, were the remains of folk who held the land before ever Norseman or Dane had summoned up courage to sail out of inlet and creek and dare the danger of the open sea across which lay they knew not what. He knew that if he could leave his pony and had the time and the implements to excavate one of those mounts around and over which the flocks of sheep and herds of cattle placidly grazed he would come across all that was left of some early Briton. He would find—as men have found since—the skeleton of the warrior, lying in its coffin fashioned out of a split log of oak, his favourite weapons, worn and rusted, at his side, his treasured belongings and personal ornaments of bronze and bone, of flint and horn, placed near to him. He would find and handle—as others have found and handled—weapons of flint and ornaments of gold and of jet, and urns fashioned of red and yellow clay, and here a rude basket made out of strips of bark, and there the bones of some animal whose lawful descendants have not been seen in these islands this side of the Roman invasion. The Dane and the Norseman, and before them the Saxon and the Roman, were in this corner of the land, and over-ran it, and settled in it, and died and sleep in it, but long before Cæsar had set out from beyond the Alps the primeval Briton was here,

dwelling in his stone-circled huts high above the ravines and indentations that cut deep through cliff and headland into the heart of the wild moors.

But Alan had no time to indulge in speculations and thoughts concerning the folk of the dead past, for he was infinitely more interested, in spite of his learning, in the folk of the living present, and especially in one who had blue eyes beneath a crown of golden hair. And so in the summer afternoon he rode slowly forward—for the surface of the road was none too good—along the headlands, by Osgodby and Cayton, and Lebberston and Gristhorpe, and past Filey, of which he could see naught but the church tower, and Hunmanby, in old days the home of the man who kept the hounds that hunted the adjacent woods, and Leighton and Speeton and Brempton, and so came out on the great nose of land across which, between Bempton Cliffs and Sewerby, the Danes cut a great dyke which is a wonder to this day. From an eminence by the roadside he gazed at Flamborough Head stretching out, a great grey-green triangular expanse of land, to the ocean in front: there, at its farther extremity, was the ancient tower of which the fiddler had told him; there, nearer him, was Flamborough itself, the town of the folk who regarded all who lived west of the Dyke as strangers and foreigners, and who kept themselves to themselves, lived amongst themselves, intermarried with themselves, for generation after generation. He would have liked to go sea-

ward at that point, but the afternoon was coming to a close, and on the landward side the country was wild and sparsely populated, and Cransthorpe was still to find. He ate and drank the last of the food and wine which Fiddling Dick's thoughtfulness had secured for him, and with another look at the sunlight which flooded the great headland and turned the flashing waters beyond it to a glare too dazzling to watch, mounted the pony again and turned inward. And suddenly remembering that the beast must have traversed that road before, and would therefore know the path home, he let it take its own way—which was a wise thing to do, for in that region travellers and wayside folk were as scarce as houses.

It was an hour later, and the evening shadows were falling, when the pony, which, bridle lying loose on its neck, had gone up one lane and down another after its own will, brought him around the corner of a windswept coppice to the brow of a hill beneath which lay a little valley, through whose midst wound a narrow stream shaded by alder and willow. In the heart of this valley lay the thorpe, originally founded by Danish ancestors and still bearing the characteristic marks and signs of the settlements made in days when men found it best to herd closely together. A narrow, high-backed bridge of one arch spanned the grey stream; around it, at each end, were the little houses; at its foot, on the side farthest from the point from which Alan

looked stood the church, on a green patch of turf from which rose plain headstones shadowed by dark yew-trees. On the sloping sides of the valley sheep and cattle were quietly grazing; over the village and the church rooks circled above the trees in which their young still hovered about the parent nests; the sound of voices and laughter came up to Alan from lads and children who lingered or played around the bridge. This was a scene of pastoral simplicity and ease to which he had long been a stranger, and he drew the pony's rein, and paused to gaze his fill at it, not without a wistful sense of its appeal to those instincts in man which make for peace. Better far, he thought, to live one's life in an Arcadia like this than to share perils of the camp or engage in the feverish pursuits of the court!

But there was a feature of this landscape which quickly drew Alan's attention away from the village. At a short distance from the yew-shaded churchyard, on a level stretch of land which lay between the bank of the river and the foot of the hillside, stood one of those tofts or enclosed homesteads which are still to be found all along the East Coast, from Dover onward, and are a certain sign of the original Danish and Norse settlement. Alan had never seen aught of this sort before, and he gazed at the place with wonder, and with a speculation largely bred of his recent military experiences. From his elevated position he could look directly down upon the homestead; its lines and arrange-

ments were spread out before him as on a chart or plan. He saw that whoever had designed it had first built up a great four-square embankment or turf-wall, several feet in height, and had then planted, on the inner side, a double row of elm-trees, now grown to their full maturity and forming an imposing barricade of trunk and bough and leaf. Within the great square thus shut off from the meadows and fields without stood the farmstead, with its house, its buildings, its orchard and garden, its fold and its stack-yard, all contained inside the double defence of turf-wall and twin line of trees. And looking closer, Alan saw that outside the high bank was a wide ditch or moat, the water of which was drained from the river, and he caught the gleam of the water in it, and at that he marvelled all the more, having until then known nothing of how husbandmen in the old days surrounded themselves and their dependants and their flocks and herds with certain safeguards.

"There is a place that was not so easy to get into once upon a time!" he murmured. "If it came to a bit of hand-to-hand fighting, twenty stout fellows would hold that against a hundred."

And there he was right, and many a place of that sort was so held in the days before Friar Bacon or Schwartz or somebody discovered gunpowder, and men fought at close quarters with axe and bill and pike, and had no more artillery than the primitive catapult and arbalist. A ditch filled with water, a high bank of earth behind it, a palisade of stout

trees—these were defences easily manned and held by brave men.

As he gazed, Alan wondered what place this could be. And then he suddenly wondered, with a great leaping of the heart, if this was the end of his journey, if down there behind the great green wall of elm, somewhere beneath the high-pitched roof of red tile, was—Freda? He let the reins drop again, and gave the pony a gentle kick.

"If you are at home go there by the nearest way!" he said.

The pony started forward as if in no wise loth to obey a command which had it but understood the language of it, was welcome. But instead of following a steep descent which led down to the little bridge it turned off through a gateless opening in the next hedgerow, and went zig-zagging down a hillside amongst sheep and cattle who took no more notice of it and its rider than if they had been of their own sort. And as they dropped down Alan saw that at the foot of the hillside there was a line of stepping-stones, and the evidence of a ford across the river, and on the opposite bank a great oaken gate set in the surrounding bank, and he knew that his beast was going home to Throxenby's Toft. And presently they splashed through the stream and came up to the stout gate and found it fast, as Alan had expected it would be, and so he was close to Paradise and yet shut out of it.

Now that he was close to it, he found that the wall of turf was higher than he had imagined, also

that it was so steep that it was impossible to force the pony over it. The ditch which ran beneath it was wide and deep and he saw no passage across but that on which he stood, by which cattle and horses gained the gate. And so not being minded to wait there until he was detected, he raised his voice and let out a great cry which woke a correspondingly great echo within the tree-walled enclosure. Before the echo had died away a shockheaded lad lifted an astonished face above the earth wall close by. He looked more astonished when he saw the pony.

"Is this where Swend Throxenby lives?" demanded Alan.

The lad nodded, having previously opened his mouth once or twice without speaking.

"I have brought home his beast. How can I get in?"

The lad vanished, appeared again at the gate, and manipulated some intricate mechanism which swung it open. Alan passed inside, and beneath the great wall of elm.

"And now where is the house?"

The lad, still silent from his amazement, led him through the trees and pointed across the triply-guarded space within.

CHAPTER VIII

SWEND THROXENBY

THE June evening had now settled to twilight, and in the long range of buildings towards which the shockheaded lad pointed there was already the gleam of lamp and candle. Alan paused for a moment as he emerged from the belt of trees and gazed at a scene which was in every way unfamiliar to him. At the farther end of the enclosure stood the house, low of wall but high of roof, with dormer windows breaking the wide space between eave and roof-tree and tall chimneys showing dark against the yellow of the western sky. Before it lay a walled garden; before that an expanse of green turf in the middle of which was a round pond over which the high elms cast long shadows. Across the enclosure was a fold, and beyond the fold a range of out-buildings, stable and byre, and barn and granary; in formal rows at the other end of the toft were the round stacks of wheat and barley which still remained over from the previous harvest's yield; between them and the row of giant elms lay an orchard. The place was a little world of industry and obvious prosperity contained within itself; to the refugee, always carrying about

with him the remembrance of his own blackened hearthstone and roofless hall, it seemed like a paradise of peace and contentment.

He turned to the lad, who had followed him as he advanced towards the shadowed pond.

"You are one of Mr. Throxenby's lads? Then you will know this pony?"

The lad grinned widely, and laid a hand on the pony's neck.

"Then you will know where to stable him. Give him a good feed—he deserves it. Now show me where I can find the master."

The lad pointed to a stone porch at the end of the house.

"If you knock at that door somebody will come," he answered. "They mostly sit in the hall there of a night, the master, and the young masters, and the young mistress."

And he led the pony off towards the stable across the enclosure, talking endearingly to it as to an old friend.

Alan made his way by the pond and the end of the garden to the porch which the lad had indicated. His heart beat high; he had a curious and a pleasant feeling of warmth; something told him that he was treading the threshold of sympathy and friendship. He turned the corner of the house and suddenly found himself in front of a long, low mullioned window; no blind or curtain was drawn over it, and he was free, standing outside in the dusk, to look within upon a scene of quiet family

life, to which he had long been a stranger. Some such scene he remembered in days gone by before his own mother had died, before his father and his brother and himself had gone out with high hopes and warm enthusiasm to strike another blow for the dying cause. He stood and looked and felt no compunction or delicacy in looking.

Swend Throxenby, the evening meal over, sat with his children in a low-ceilinged hall, on the stone walls of which danced the shifting gleams of the fire of logs that burnt gaily on the hearth and looked welcome enough, summer though it was. A great man and a grand man he was, thought the watcher, the worthy sire of two such giants as Olaf and Thorkill. He sat in a high-backed chair in the full glow of the fire; its flames lighted up his big frame, his massive head, crowned with curling locks of silvery hair, his parson's bands of white cambric showing against his coat of home-spun grey; they glanced too, on the shining sides of a silver tankard which stood on a table at his side, and on the golden locks of the boy Gamel, who sat on his mighty knee, apparently listening to some tale which the old man was telling between the whiffs of tobacco which he was smoking from a long clay pipe. At a little distance, seated at a round table of age-blackened oak, Olaf's giant frame was bent over what were obviously account books and papers; in the middle of the hearth Thorkill's mighty bulk and fair head were also bent, but over nothing more exacting than

a broken fishing-rod which his great fingers were splicing with deft movements. And between the window and the fire, but with her back to him, so that he could see naught of her but the gleam of the dancing flames upon her golden hair, sat Freda, busying herself, as young women did in those days, in spinning, following the example of Bertha, the beautiful Queen of Helvetia, who, according to the chronicles, was such an ardent spinner that she had a distaff affixed to her saddle, and spun her thread as she rode her palfrey over meadow and mountain and moor.

Alan went round to the stone porch and knocked at the door without. It struck him as strange that he, an outcast and a stranger, should knock so confidently at the door of folk of whose very existence he had known nothing a few days earlier. But again the feeling of security and warmth thrilled through him; he was as certain of a kindly welcome within those walls as he would have been at the door of any one of his own folk, all of whom were dead and gone or fugitive like himself. And when the door opened, and the light of a hand lamp shone into the outer porch, he stepped forward confidently.

Freda stood before him. The lamp, held high in her hand, threw into relief her face and his, and for the second time these two young folk, strangers though they were, as convention and usage would have had it, felt the hot blood mount to their cheeks as they gazed long and deep into each other's eyes. Without a word they clasped hands; without

a word the girl drew back into the hall, motioning Alan to follow her.

"It is the young gentleman who saved Gamel's life," she said simply and quietly. And she stood aside for Alan to pass.

The twin giants leapt to their feet with a mighty roar of inarticulate welcome; the boy jumped from his father's knee and ran with outstretched hands. Alan found himself clapped on the back; Olaf possessed himself of one hand, Thorkill of the other; he was welcomed and questioned all in one breath; he was dragged to the fire. And in this whirlwind of emotion he found himself in front of Swend Throxenby, who had risen from his great chair, and he stared at him with amazement, for the farmer parson was as veritable a giant as his sons, and must at some time have been an inch taller, even as he was still as thick and muscular. Alan felt himself a pigmy as he stood in the midst of the three men, and put his hand in the great palm and sinewy fingers which the patriarch stretched out to him.

"Sir," said Swend Throxenby, "I am glad to welcome you to my house and to thank you for your bravery in saving my son's life. It is but a little while since these other children of mine were telling me of you, and I did not think that I should so soon have the opportunity of thanking you in person. You are a thousand times welcome."

Alan gripped the old man's hand. He looked him straight in the face, and turned from him to Olaf and Thorkill.

"I have come to ask for shelter, for refuge," he said. "Will you harbour me for three days?"

"Three weeks—three months!" exclaimed Olaf.

"Aye, or three years," added Thorkill.

Alan looked around him. Freda and the boy had left the hall; he had noticed a whispering between them. He turned to Swend again.

"You must let me speak truth. I am proscribed—attainted. What is more, there is a price on my head. It is much more than likely that I may be followed here. And I would not have you brought to any trouble, sir, nor any of your family. Perhaps I ought not to have come here, for I see now that you must be a well-known man of these parts, and——"

Swend thrust him into a chair close to his own.

"And therefore all the better able to give you the shelter you need, sir," said he. "We will talk of all that when you have supped—'tis ill talking on an empty belly. Rest assured you are safe—eat and drink! Freda!"

But Freda had alrady anticipated her father's commands, and she and Gamel now came back into the hall, bearing cloths and napkins, and the necessaries for eating and drinking, and presently Alan had the three brothers and the sister waiting upon him and pressing him to eat this and drink that, and being young he threw away all thought of his misfortunes and his situation, and became as gay and light-hearted as they were when they told of their adventures at the Barnaby Fair after he had left them, from which, he soon learnt, they had

only returned that very afternoon, greatly to Swend's gratification, who had never been left by himself before.

"And glad we are to be under our own roof-tree again," said Olaf. "Merrymaking is naught in our line. Neither are great towns and cities—I would not give an acre of our Wolds for all York. But you are doubtless of another way of thinking, having seen more of the world than we have."

Alan looked round him and sighed. The lad had gone to bed; Freda had betaken herself to her spinning again; the old man had relighted his pipe; they were all gathered round the fire. Yes, he had seen more of the world—but naught so peaceful as this. And conscious of sympathy, he felt that he must tell these good people his tale.

"I cannot come under any man's roof until I make myself known," he said, suddenly. "If you take risks for me, it is but right you should know whom and what you are harbouring. You are true folk—I can talk to you as I would have talked to my own father and brother had they been alive."

And he told them all, straightforwardly and simply, as he had told Lord Carlisle, and not forgetting his adventures since he had left Boroughbridge. And the old man listened quietly and attentively, and Olaf and Thorkill with wide-open eyes, and Freda forgot her spinning, and it was well she sat in the shadow, for she was a sentimental and warmhearted lass, and though Alan had no gifts as a story-teller, and was practical and matter-of-fact,

there were tears in her eyes when she heard that he was landless and moneyless and a wolf's head amongst men, all for the sake of an ideal.

"And so, good friends, there is the truth," concluded Alan, glancing from face to face. "And as I say, I do not know that I may not be followed, even at this moment. Mr. Throxenby, you are a clergyman—will there be harm to you if I am taken in your house? For if so, let me go out before harm comes. I can make shift on your Wolds for a day or two as I have made shift on my own Moors, and——"

Olaf and Thorkill began to growl; Swend took his long pipe out of his mouth. He glanced across at Freda and he smiled.

"I think that Freda has already prepared the guest-chamber," he said. "There is no need for your lordship——"

Alan interrupted him impatiently.

"Not that, sir, if you please! It—it grates harshly, as things are. My name is Alan—call me by it. Time enough for such things as titles when the king has his own again! Forgive me interrupting you. You were saying——?"

"That there seems no need for you to trouble yourself at present. These lads of mine had told me a great deal before you knocked at our door. Your danger appears to lie through this Parson Hood at present. Olaf, there, saw Hood this very morning in York."

Alan turned eagerly to Olaf.

"Ah, then I did not kill him!"

Olaf laughed.

"Only gave him what has made him go about with a tied-up jaw! Pity that you had not struck a little harder. For he knows of that thousand pounds, and his long nose is keen to be on the scent."

"You spoke with him?"

Olaf smiled as at a pleasant memory.

"This morning, ere ever the city clocks were chiming six, into the stable-yard of the Black Swan I rode, having set off homeward at sun-up. And there, badgering and cajoling, I find Master Hood, his lean jaws tied up in linen, wanting news of a certain long lad with a black visage and cut-throat air that might have been there three nights ago to leave a pony. And that far he had got with his homily when he catches sight of me and scowls all over what could be seen of his face. And one of the stable-lads catches sight of me, too—'Oh,' says he, ' 'tis true there was a young gentleman came in o' Monday night, riding a beast of Master Throxenby's there, and asked his way to Castle Howard, but I saw naught of the cut-throat about him.' Whereupon Hood turns, and sees me, and scowls more than ever, and was for making out of the yard when I steps in front of him. 'What is this you are asking about my pony, Mr. Hood?' says I. 'I ask naught of your pony,' says he, 'but of the fellow that rode it, and that you lent it to at the Barnaby.' 'Who had it in exchange for somewhat else, you mean,' says I. And at that he stares, watching me

narrowly. 'It is not likely that I should lend ponies to strangers,' I says, not wanting him to know all. 'Then you don't know where he is gone?' says he. 'Beverley would be a likely place,' says I. Then he stares again and draws me outside into Coney Street. 'Hark you, Mr. Olaf,' he says, 'I know you and your family well, and none of you were ever averse to making money.' 'Honestly,' I says, 'always honest, Mr. Hood.' 'I would counsel no man to make money otherwise,' say he, like the canting hound he is, 'and I know no honester way of making money than by furthering the law. Yon black-visaged lad,' he says, 'is a Jacobite, and as like as not there is a price on his head. If you know aught of where he went I'll make it worth your while to tell me,' he goes on, eagerly enough. 'I would have had him here in York, the other night, but that he played a trick on me and so buffeted me that I am but just risen from my bed.' 'Take care that you don't come within reach of his fist again then, Mr. Hood,' says I. 'I know naught of where the lad is—half across the country, or maybe on the North Sea by this time.' I says, and I turned away and left him."

"Then at that time he knew nothing of the reward?" said Alan.

"Having been kept to his bed, no doubt he didn't," answered Olaf. "But you may be sure he soon would know, for I myself saw the bill as I rode out of York at Monk Bar, fresh put up and the paste wet on it. And Hood will hunt for you—first at Castle Howard, then at Scarborough, then here.

Most folk know Parson Hood and his nose for money."

Alan stirred restlessly in his chair.

"Let me go," he said. "They tell me it is a serious thing to harbour such as I am. I must not bring trouble here."

And he looked round on all of them with an anxious face. But Swend knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and began to refill it with tobacco from the great lead box which stood on the table at his elbow.

"We could hide half-a-dozen folk here, and not all the Hoods in the world could find them or know that they were here or had ever been here," he said. We have this advantage—nobody can approach us without being seen before they get here. To-morrow we will show you a certain watch-tower built out above the house—if a good watch is kept there nobody can get into Throxenby Toft by day without their presence being known ere ever they are within a half-mile of us. So rest content with that—and as for night, why, we have enough lads about the place to keep a watch all night along the turf-wall, and if Hood did bring soldiers—as he might—from Scarborough, we have means of putting a guest where nobody can find him. Places like these sir, were not made as they are for naught."

And that Alan more than believed, when, next morning, Swend Throxenby himself took him round the toft and showed him with great pride all that it was capable of. It had certainly been built many a long century before with the idea of defence, and

it was difficult to see how it could have been invaded in the days of hand-to-hand fighting. To begin with, the dyke, ditch, moat, which ran all round it was no mere hand's breadth of water, but a good twenty feet across, and according to Swend twelve feet deep. The turf-wall rose from it in an almost vertical line; all round the enclosure it was never less than ten feet high. Apart from the gate by which Alan had entered the toft there was but one main entrance, a great double door of iron-barred oak which stood in the angle between the house and the outbuildings; from it an occupation road led to the village. With that, and the gate at the ford closed, the whole place was securely shut in from the outer world. Alan marvelled at it, never having seen such a homestead before.

"But why keep up such defences in these days?" he asked. "You might be expecting an invasion."

Swend laughed cheerily.

"That is a fair question. Well, there is but one answer to it—we do it because our fathers did it before us. You see we Throxenbys have lived and died on this our land for—I do not know how long. But we are there in the parish registers—I will show them to you—from the first page. They were careless of them in the old days, but I have, under safe keeping, in a stout oak chest, such as have come down from the fourteenth century, though 'tis true that the earlier volumes are copies made on vellum after the Convocation Order of 1597—where the original paper books are gone, I cannot tell. But

there we are—owners of Throxenby's Toft, and one of us always vicar of Cransthorpe outside there, from that time, and we were here for hundreds of years before that. And as I say, we have always done what our fathers did in their days—farmed our land, served the altar, and kept up the old place as it always was. But follow me, and I will show it to you from another point of vantage."

He led the way back into the house, and through low-ceilinged rooms, the oak rafters of which were black with age, and along narrow and dark passages until they came to the foot of a stone stairway the steps of which were worn and hollowed from long usage. Alan counted a hundred and fifteen of them before he and his guide came out in a small white-washed chamber out of which through a trap-door in the roof rose a stout, roughly-made ladder. The parson-farmer looked at it doubtfully.

"It is many a long year since I climbed that!" said he. "I doubt if any of us ever come up this tower now, unless it be Gamel or some of the farm-lads. And my weight, Mr. Alan, is nearer twenty than eighteen stone! Go you first, and then if I break down the ladder and fall I shall do no harm to any but myself."

"Let me go up alone," said Alan, eyeing the worn rungs of the ladder in one glance and Swend's great bulk in another.

"Nay—nay, I can enjoy an adventure as well as a younger man! I have not taken a bird's-eye view of my roofs and acres—save, indeed, from the hill-

tops—since before Freda was born. The ladder is sound oak."

Once through the trap-door Alan found himself in a high-shafted tower of rough, undressed grey stone, pierced by lancet-shaped casements, destitute of glass or even of wooden slate, through which the soft summer wind came whistling with a will. There were jackdaws in that tower, and pigeons too, and as the climbers emerged upon their solitude they raised a whirring of wings and a cloud of dust as they fled out into the morning air. Alan was glad to gain the head of the ladder, and to push open another trap-door, and find his head and shoulders in the sunshine. He climbed out on a square, lead-covered roof, fenced in by a battlemented parapet, and, turning, gave a hand to his host, who emerged panting from his unaccustomed exertion.

"In good truth, I am neither as young nor as nimble as I was!" said Swend. "But here we are—and there is a prospect for you."

Alan walked round the parapet and saw at once that if the tower had been designed for purposes of observation it was equal to all necessity. Set in the midst of the farmhouse buildings, it cleared the tops of the elms, and all the country surrounding toft and thorpe lay outspread like a map beneath it. The roofs and gables of the house lay deep below; to the westward the valley was lost in the rolling Wolds; to the east, far away, there was a strip of sea, a mere shining ribbon of it, discernible on the horizon. But Alan looked with most interest at the im-

mediate environment of the toft, and he was struck once more by the manner of its fencing and isolation. Beyond the entrance at the ford, by which he himself had gained access, there was no way of getting into Throxenby's Toft but by the road from the village, which was a narrow road, sunk deeply between overhanging banks and so made that there was room for no more than a single cart in it. And where this road came up to the moat there was an ancient bridge of wood which could be drawn up by chains and pulleys. The defences of the place, seen from that tower, seemed more formidable than ever.

"So that is Cransthorpe!" said Alan, looking down upon the village, quiet enough at that hour of the day. "And that inn, I suppose, at the foot of the bridge, is yours?"

"That is mine—the Throxenby Arms. For aught I know, I am the only parson publican in England at this time. But there may be others of whom I have not heard. And at Lastingham, across the hills, there was once upon a time a parson who not only served ale to his parishioners between the services, but gave them a tune on his fiddle as well. I keep this village inn, Master Alan, because I conceive that I am the one man in the place who is best fitted to keep it. And the result is that we have no idlers or bibbers in our village. Every day I go and make my visit; and if I find any man inclined to keep his pot company for mere wantonness' sake I help him about his business with my stick!"

"So you are lord and master of all you see?"

Swend leaned his great frame over the parapet and looked around him.

"Of nearly all I can see. My land stretches, seaward, to yonder steep hillside, where you see the sheep; landward, to that copse at the edge of the Wolds. The village is mine; all its folk work for me. I have had a goodly heritage and a peaceful life, and I thank God for both. In time I shall die, and Olaf and Thorkill will succeed me, and the lad Gamel will have the living, and the world will go on without me. But there will always, I think, be folk of our name and blood in this valley. It has been my world—I doubt not that you, young as you are, have seen much more of the world than I have."

"I wish I had seen less," said Alan.

And he looked down again at the charm and quietude of the scene below him, at the sunlit meadows and hillsides with the sheep and cattle grazing in them, and his mind went back, as it was always going back, to the far different scenes with which he had so lately been sadly familiar, and all his instinct cried out within him for rest and peace.

CHAPTER IX

THE FARMSTEAD GARDEN

THAT afternoon, while the land outside lay sleeping in the June sunlight, and the blackbirds piped lazily in the holly hedges, Alan and Freda talked in the shaded garden. In the cool stone hall within the farmstead Swend Throxenby slumbered in his hooded chair, his handkerchief thrown about his head and eyes; the twin brothers were out and about their business; the lad had gone a-fishing with the rod which Thorkill had mended for him the night before; all about the toft was an atmosphere of peace and silence, broken only by the occasional bleat of the sheep feeding on the adjacent hillsides. There was a continual murmur of bees and humming of insects in that garden; the languorous sound seemed to Alan to accord well with the scent of the homely flowers which were in full bloom all round the arbour in which he and the girl sat. She was busily occupied with her needle; he sat with hands thrust in his pockets, idly watching her. And he suddenly laughed.

Freda looked up from her sewing with a swift glance of interrogation. And Alan laughed again.

"Don't think me suddenly gone mad, Mistress Freda!" he said. "I laughed at a thought of mine. Shall I tell it to you? Well, then, this is the first day's peace I have known for nigh on to a year."

"I am sorry," she said gently.

"What, that I should have a little peace?" he said, teasingly. "No—but that I have had so much of its opposite. Thank you for your kind thought. But there is the truth—and while I sat with you all at your good father's table just now, I wondered if—if this is all a dream."

Freda looked at him half-shyly and then around the garden and the great elms above them.

"It is very real to me," she answered.

"That is because you know it so well. You are—part of it. Once upon a time—it seems a very long time ago!—I was part and parcel of a life just as peaceful. I do not think I was made for adventures."

"And yet you have been through so many."

"Aye, and would go through them again, right willingly, if need arose, and for the good cause! But until last August, when I said good-bye to the old castle, I was a dreamer—perhaps I am still one. You see, there had never been need for me to be aught else—my brother was a lad of action, always up and away with rod or gun, but I was ever for books, and for roaming about the old place, and hearing tales of it and the ancient days. I wish you could see that old castle of mine which I shall never see again!"

"But you do not know that you will never see it again! My father says that you will come to your own yet."

"Your father is a man of kind heart, and his wish is parent to his thought. If ever I see Stirthes again, then Charles Stuart will sit where the Hanoverian sits now!"

Freda threaded her needle, and for a moment or two sewed in silence while Alan watched her.

"I should like to see your old castle," she said at last.

"You would see a wreck. I saw it just before I set out with Jack Holt and his cattle on our march to Boroughbridge. The Hanoverians had been there. They had stripped off the roof and then burned the plenishings—furniture as you would say. There was naught left but so much grey wall. It will make a fine place for the owls and the hoody crows!"

The girl looked up with a quick glance of sympathy.

"Do not think of that," she said. "Tell me about it as it was—before."

"Before! Ah, then it was a fine old place. Not a great place—we were never a race with over much of worldly gear, we Stirthes. But it was very, very old—a four-square castle, something like what they call a peel on the Border—and it stood, and stands, what there is left of it—on a high bluff overhanging a wooded valley in which there was a brown river. I used to think there could be no place on earth so romantic or picturesque. And we had a

library of old books there in which, perhaps, I read over much; maybe, if I had given more time to the practical things of life and less to books I should have done better."

"But a man who is learned in books is better off than men who are not, surely? That is what I have heard my father say. And now——"

"And now, what?"

"Perhaps I ought not to say it. But I was thinking that since you have given your all for the cause, perhaps your learning will stand you in good stead."

"Aye, if I were learned! But I fear my reading of books was all for the sake of romances and tales of war and love. If I had been well tutored in mathematics and such-like dry matters, it would have been better for me. However, if I win to the Continent I daresay I can earn my living by teaching something to the sons of the Dutch burghers. That seems all that I can do."

Freda bent her head over the work in her lap.

"It seems hard that men should be forced away from their own land," she said. "Will they never let you come back unless you make submission?"

"That is a question which only time can answer. Probably not. They can do without us. What use is a handful of beggarly Scots lords to a government that makes noblemen of fat citizens and Flemish moneylenders? No—when I leave these shores I suppose I leave them for ever, as other men have done before."

"But—you do not want to leave them?"

Alan made no instant reply. He looked around him and had a vision of what might have been if he had first seen the light under a different star.

"If I could have what I wanted," he said presently, "I think I would have a life such as the life you seem to live here. I would like a home, and peaceful days, and—and—but perhaps you feel what I would like. Men talk of the glory of war, but believe me, there is naught in it. Mistress Freda! I have seen all that I ever want to see of that! But you will think me a faint-heart and no man."

The girl flashed a look at him.

"What! When I saw you save our Gamel's life!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, that! That is a matter which has been made too much of," he said. "There were half a score folk there that would have done as much—besides, yon River Ure is too mild and good-mannered to drown folk who fall into it. If it had been Tweed or Tay, now—but, jesting apart, I am not a man of war, but of peace. I envy your good father and your two great brothers, and I wish I were a farmer with a snug holding like this, and sheep and cattle on my lands, and a roof-tree above my head and a warm hearth to sit by o' nights—and a wife on the other side of it," he added to himself, "and I should be a lucky man if you were she! 'Tis a picture that is pleasing, you must allow," he said aloud.

"But only half a one. Farmers have their troubles as well as other folk. It is not always summer."

"Why, true, the cattle may get the plague, or a young horse may injure itself leaping a forbidden fence or a wet harvest may come, or the fly may spoil the potato crop! But a pastoral life is very free from care."

"In books!"

"Well, that is a good answer, but men could not write down in books what their experience has not prompted, and I think that when the poets sing about swains and shepherdesses and the joys of Arcadia they must be something near a truth. You would not exchange your life here with all its sweet pleasures for that of a court?"

"A court! What do I know of courts, Mr. Alan? I am liker to know more of cows than courts!"

"And I would prefer the cow-shed to the court, from what little I have seen of both. If my poor brother had lived—and would God he had!—I was never going to leave our old castle, but live in it a quiet pastoral life. It was agreed between us—he was to let me have house-room and my books, and I was to have amused myself in cattle and sheep-breeding. You see that I have all the instincts of the farmer in me."

"Then—why not be a farmer?"

"I would willingly be a farmer if I were not what I am—a hunted man with a thousand pounds on my head. What a world this is—to think that any one

should offer a thousand good golden pounds for my head, simply to cut it off and stick it on a pike for the crows to pick at!"

Freda dropped the sewing into her lap and looked at him.

"Is it right—to talk like that?"

Alan glanced sharply at her; under his keen gaze the girl's face flushed and she turned her eyes away. And the lad rose, scarce knowing what he was doing, and just as quickly sat down again.

"Forgive me! I—I have got a trick of thinking and talking bitterly, and of saying what may seem cynical and sneering. It is, I think, from being so much alone. You see, when one is plucked out of a warm nest, as I was, and flung into a sea of troubles without warning, one is apt to grow something harsh towards life. It—it would have made all the difference if we had won. One likes not to think that a righteous cause is trampled in the dust."

"There is the future. And—you are young and strong. Besides, as my father says, you will be coming to your own again."

"Why, but there is naught to come to! What is an empty title when all one's money is gone, lands over-mortgaged, and one is attainted? No—wherever my future lies, it is not back in Scotland yonder. Perhaps I shall go to the New World and grow cotton and tobacco. But—shall I teil you a secret?"

"If you like."

"I am one of those folk who are born with a great craving for love and sympathy, and I cannot

abide solitude and loneliness. My brother and I were fond of each other—we never differed, save in boyish quarrels, as all lads will, but I had a foster-brother, Hughie Robertson, that I loved even better. Now, if I had had Hughie to go with, perhaps I might have gone to America, and we would have started a new life together."

"And why can he not go with you?"

"Because he lies under the sod at Culloden, poor Hughie. Every man that went from our land lies somewhere—Hughie was the last of them. I buried him and my brother in one grave. After that, I was alone."

Freda looked up from her sewing again, and after a swift glance at Alan, gazed across the garden with thoughtful eyes.

"Mr. Alan," she said simply, "will your conscience ever let you do what you told us last night Lord Carlisle wanted you to do?"

"Make my submission to the Hanoverian usurper? It will not! I have taken my oath to my lawful king. I cannot forswear myself, Mistress Freda!"

"But—supposing you were pardoned?"

"I? Pardoned! By the folk who are so anxious to get my head that they will give a thousand pounds for me? There will never be any pardon for me or such as me. Their temper is that of their butcher, Cumberland. They massacred our men when the fight was over, out of sheer lust of killing and of blood. And now they want to massacre us, the

leaders. Pardon! As well expect the cat to let the mouse go when it is fairly in her claws."

"I said—supposing you were pardoned."

"Well, supposing I were? What then?"

"Then you would be free to do what you liked. And you might, if you liked, keep those cows and sheep that you talked of."

And she looked at him for the first time with a glance in which there was something of roguishness. Before he could speak she bent to her sewing again and went on speaking.

"Though, all the same, you would no doubt weary of them and the life," she said. "It is very well to read of shepherds and shepherdesses in the books, but as I said, it is not always summer, Mr. Alan, and I have heard our Olaf, who's no baby, as you may see, fit to cry with cold when he has been out on our wintry mornings."

"I wish it were my fortune to try such a life. I would bear much weather of all sorts to be like Abraham, and have flocks and herds and live in a tent."

"Far better to have a round stone wall and a stone roof round you—in these regions at any rate! It is a pity that you are not free to follow your fancy, for in the next valley there is at this moment a sheep-farm to let—I heard our boys talking of it but yesterday."

"If I could follow such a life—and dearly I would love to!—I have no money to stock a farm

with. All I possess in this world, Mistress Freda, is literally some fifty guineas. I daresay that if my affairs were all reckoned up by the lawyer folk in Edinburgh, and all the mortgages and debts paid off I should have some money, and possibly some property remaining out of the wreck. But the Government will seize all I have, of course. No—I could not stock a farm."

"My father would stock it for you," said Freda in a low voice. "It would be a pleasure to him."

Alan sat bolt upright and stared at her.

"Why would your father do all that for me? A stranger!"

"No stranger since you saved Gamel's life. Perhaps—perhaps Lord Carlisle will get a pardon for you. You could not prevent the Government from pardoning you if it had a mind to, could you? And —if you were once pardoned, it—it would not matter what your opinions were, would it? For my father says there will never be any more fighting."

"I don't know what you are talking about. The notion of the Government, as you call it, pardoning me, is—is as big a dream as any I ever had. No—no—there is going to be no farm in a peaceful valley and no quiet pastoral life for me, Mistress Freda! But——"

"Yes?"

"One thing you can tell me. If—if things had been so that I could have settled down in those parts

to such a life as that, would it have pleased you to know that I was only beyond the hill there?"

"You saw how pleased my father and my brothers were to see you last night!"

"But—you?"

Freda began to bundle her sewing together.

"It is time to feed the fowls," she said, rising. "I must go. But—you may come with me."

CHAPTER X

THE MIDNIGHT COUNCIL

THERE was no sign of Parson Hood or of any such cattle at Throxenby's Toft that day. And, as Swend had rightly said the night before, it would have been a difficult matter for any strangers to get near without the folk of the farmstead being aware of their presence. Round and about the toft and the adjacent thorpe there were plenty of long-legged and keen-eyed lads (there being no such thing as compulsory attendance at schools in those days) who only needed orders from Swend or from Olaf or from Thorkill to spread themselves around the place at every point of vantage, and to keep lynx-eyed observation on every road and pathway. No man could have come to Cransthorpe from Scarborough or Bridlington or Driffield by road, or from anywhere else across the Wolds by even a sheep-track without his presence being known to Swend and his folk while he was yet a mile away. The lads had no knowledge of what occasioned their watch; Swend's word was law with them, and they knew the bountiful resources of his kitchen. And so wherever there was a rising bit of ground, a daisy-spangled hillock on the grave of some dead and

gone chieftain, there was a flaxen-haired and blue-eyed youngster with bread and cheese in his pocket for the day and the prospect of a hot supper in his mind for the night, and the rolling land was swept with keen glances in such fashion that scarce a rabbit went into its warren unperceived.

But when the night fell a different plant of protection was necessary. It was not then a question of eyes but of ears. And Olaf, after a visit to the great kitchen where the farm men sat of an evening, came into the hall with his programme.

"Hartas Dring and I will watch till sunrise," said he. "After that you, Thorkill, can take your turn till breakfast-time—you and Job Story."

"Agreed," said Thorkill. "So long as Hartas knocks at my window."

"I shall watch with you," said Alan. "That is but fair since all this trouble is on my account. And why should I not spare at any rate one of you?"

But Swend put his foot down on that proposition.

"No!" said he firmly. "Your duty is to go to bed and to sleep in peace and as long as you can. Remember, to-morrow night you may not have—the chance of a bed. That means cold comfort, but we must face possibilities. Leave all to us and do you sleep."

"And there is another reason why you should not watch," said Olaf, laying his hand on Alan's shoulder. "And a good one."

"And that is——?"

"That you have not our ears. Outside here at

night it is as silent as the grave. In early spring-time, when I am up with the lambing ewes, I can hear the surf beating at the foot of the cliffs at Speeton and Bempton. I'll warrant that if any horseman comes within three miles of Throxenby's Toft to-night Thorkill there and I and our two men will hear his beast's feet, and be able to tell not only where he is but what direction he is coming from. You rest, as my father bids, and leave all to us. We are used to night work."

"You all load me with kindness," said Alan.

And he went to sleep thinking of the giant figure of Olaf patrolling the turf-wall in the darkness. Olaf, however, did little patrolling, for none was necessary. He knew that whoever came to Throxenby's Toft on such business as executing the King's warrant in any shape would come by the road, and into Cransthorpe there were but two roads—that by which Alan had come from the coast road between Scarborough and Bridlington, and another which ran across the Wolds from the direction of Driffield. And both joined in the village. So he and Hartas had naught to do but keep their ears open, and that they did in a certain outhouse which was built high above the turf-wall and the moat, and they smoked tobacco and talked of sheep and blinked at the glittering stars in the wondrous blue of the summer night, and were wrapped in a silence unbroken by aught but the cry of an owl in the hillside copse or the leaping of a fish in the moat beneath them.

It was past midnight, and the folk inside the farmstead had been asleep for a good two hours and more, when the two guardians, just then silent as the night itself, suddenly started with a mutual appreciation of a far-off sound.

"From Scarborough way!" said Olaf in a whisper.

"And a good four mile off yet, master," muttered Hartas Dring.

There are few things more impressive than the sound of a horse's feet, coming steadily towards one, from however far away, in the silence of the night and in the solitude of a lonely place. Those who hear that sound unconsciously brace themselves for news of good or evil. The horse bears a messenger who carries tidings—whether it be spurred into a gallop or suffered to fall into a gentle canter, the tidings, when they come, will be the same; and every moment they are being brought nearer, nearer. In the end the folk who hear that sound, and have perhaps been long waiting for it, hold their breath until horse and rider come in sight out of the darkness. And in this sort of expectancy waited Olaf and his man, listening to the sharp ring of the iron-shod hoofs on the far-off coast road.

The sound suddenly ceased.

"He has stopped," said Olaf.

"He is at the guide-post by the cross roads," said Hartas. "He will turn down the grass lane if he is coming our way, and then we shall hear him on our own road on top of the hill."

Presently they heard a dull padding sound—the horse and its rider were in the grass lane. Suddenly it changed to a sharp ring again—now they were on the hard road once more with the flints rattling beneath them. The two watchers looked instinctively to the outline of the hill above them, on the extreme ridge of which the rider and his horse must come. And Hartas uttered a low exclamation.

"There he is! Look at the skyline above the edge of the hill—you will see him. Watch that star—the one that burns so bright over our Home Meadow, there by the ash-tree."

Olaf strained his eyes, and presently made out a rapidly moving mass against the dark blue of the heavens. The star was blotted out—shone brightly again; the horseman was riding swiftly forward to the lane which turned down to the village. Down its sharp descent he clattered, scarcely checking his beast's speed; over the bridge he rode and woke the echoes of the sleeping village; they heard him draw rein as he neared the church; then they heard the horse turn into the narrow, high-banked lane which led from thorpe to toft.

"Come to the gate," said Olaf, and led the way along the turf-wall to the stout door which shut in the drawbridge over the moat. There was a buttressed wall on either side of the door, and on it they mounted, waiting for the man to come up. And up he presently came, a cloaked figure riding a horse that blew and panted as if it had been ridden hard.

The man and his horse were on the drawbridge before Olaf and Hartas gave sign of their presence. Then Olaf stepped out on top of the wall.

"Hullo, there!" said he.

The rider looked up from his horse, and saw Olaf's giant figure outlined against the sky.

"Hullo yourself, master! I see I am come to the right place. You are one of the twin brothers. It matters not which. But for sake of formality, which are you?"

"First of all, who are you who ask, and what do you want?"

The rider flung himself off his horse and advanced to the barred door.

"I can tell you better what I want than who I am, master. I want a bite and a sup and a feed for my horse, and I want to see your father and you and your brother and somebody else. As to who I am, men call me Fiddling Dick."

Olaf stepped back.

"I know you. Hartas, unbar the gate and let him in." And he came down from the wall and stood waiting until the fiddler and his horse were safe within the toft. "We were on the look out," he said. "But more for foes than friends. You have news?"

"News I have, young sir, and have ridden at more speed with it than my old animal here cares about. He is blown."

"We will soon make that all right. Hartas, take the horse, and see well to it. This way," and he took

Fiddling Dick and led him towards the house. "What news?" he asked.

"Which are you, Olaf or Thorkill? You see I know your names. And doubtless one is as good as t'other, if all folk say of you be true, but it is as well to know a man by his right style."

"I am Olaf."

"Then, Olaf, you have here the long lad to whom you lent your pony at Boroughbridge Barnaby t'other day?"

"We have."

"Safe?"

"He is safe and sound asleep for aught that I know."

"That is well. I want to have some talk with you and your father and brother before I see him. But first give me bite and sup—sup, at any rate, for I rode out of Scarborough with an empty belly."

"There is no immediate danger—to him?"

"None that is very immediate. All the same we will waste no time, and you can tell your man there to keep his ears open."

Olaf led him into the house and to a little parlour which opened off the stone hall. There was a fire there, and Fiddling Dick looked at it with a friendly eye as he swung off his horseman's cloak.

"That is a good sight to see. Midsummer as it is, the night air is chilly along these North Sea headlands. And these are good things to see, too, Master Olaf, and I thank you heartily. And now while I eat and drink a little, rouse your father and

your brother, and bring them here so that we can take counsel."

And he sat down and without ceremony fell upon the spirits and water and the cold meat pasty which Olaf had hastily arranged on the table, nodding his head with appreciation at the first mouthful.

"You do not want—him?" asked Olaf, turning to the door.

"Not yet. Your father first."

So Olaf went quietly up the old staircase and roused Swend, who presently come down in a night-gown of quilted flannel, followed by Thorkill in his shirt and breeches, and the fiddler, his cheek bulging with a mouthful of the cold pasty, suspended his knife and fork in mid-air and stared at the father and sons with wide-open eyes.

"Now, if ever I saw three such men in all my travels!" he said. "Mr. Throxenby, you do not know me from another, but you have doubtless heard of me from the young gentleman you are sheltering."

"And from others," answered Swend. "You are welcome. I trust you bring the lad no ill news?"

The fiddler finished his last mouthful, replenished his glass, and slewed round his chair. He glanced at the door, which Olaf hastened to close.

"Let us talk," he said. "Now, gentlemen, you have got Mr. Alan here—so we will call him. He has doubtless told you of his plan to escape to the Continent with one Captain Knoop?"

"That he has told us."

"Well, that is all over. He might as well try to get out of Scarborough now as out of a well-secured dungeon. That man Hood, the parson of York, or ex-parson or whatever he is, has raised hue and cry upon him, and there will be soldiers here by daybreak or soon after. You are aware that there is a reward of a thousand pounds out for him?"

"We are aware of that—he told us himself."

"Aye, he is not one for keeping aught back. Very well—last night, which is to say but a very few hours ago, into Scarborough comes Parson Hood, seeking his prey, and none the more favourably-disposed towards him because Mr. Alan, with youthful impetuousness, fetched him a clout in York which loosened his jaw in another way than it is generally loosened. And, having evidently arranged matters with the authorities at York, he boldly waits upon my Lord Carlisle and demands his kinsman, with the natural result that he was shown or kicked out of his lordship's lodging with scant ceremony, but not before he had warned his lordship that if he failed to get news from him, he would go to the military with some warrant or paper which he brought from York, and would prosecute his search for Mr. Alan under authority, being convinced that he was in hiding either with him or with you. And so, as I say, you will have soldiers here soon and Hood with them. And as we all know, it is a parlous thing in these days to harbour rebels and to resist authority."

Swend looked at his two sons and his eyes gleamed from under their bushy eyebrows.

"He saved my lad's life! I shall not give him up if all King George's men come together, with George himself at their head! What say you, lads?"

"That our father speaks right," said Olaf and Thorkill in a breath.

Fiddling Dick raised his glass and drank to them.

"You are noble gentlemen, and it is naught but what I expected to hear from you. Well, now hear me! Lord Carlisle sent for me as soon as this pestilent fellow Hood had been kicked out to do his business as he liked, and he kept me in conference for a while. Now, Mr. Throxenby, this lad has powerful friends. He is a high-and-mighty, nose-in-the-air youngster, who has grand ideas of honour and chivalry, and is at present too cock-a-whoop with them to bring himself to sign or make any submission to the little gentleman who sits on the throne with such small dignity. All the same, it will never do to have his young head taken off and put on a pike. He must be protected in spite of himself. My lord of Carlisle is, as you all know, a man of vast influence and a great statesman. He is a genuine adherent of the Hanoverian succession—which is all the more reason why he must be circumspect in what he does. A full and free pardon, and release and quittance, and all the rest of it, he will obtain for my haughty and proud young gentleman upstairs, but—it will take time and diplomacy to obtain them. And the immediate question is—where can the young

man be bestowed until the happy moment arrives? For, as you see, it must not be known that Lord Carlisle is even cognisant of his whereabouts."

Swend and his sons looked at each other.

"Short of their razing the old place to the ground we could hide him or half-a-dozen in this house without fear of discovery," said Swend.

"Aye, or a score!" said Olaf.

"And if need be, we can keep a whole troop of soldiers out—so long as they do not bring cannon against us," said Thorkill.

Fiddling Dick shook his head.

"No," said he, resolutely. "There must be naught of that sort. We must be secret. Mr. Throxenby, I will tell you what my lord of Carlisle said—it is, indeed, in some sort a direct message to you. 'Go you,' he says, when he had talked matters over, 'Go you now straight to Swend Throxenby, for there is no man who knows the edge of the sea and the fringe of the Wolds better than he does. Tell him how things stand—ask him if he cannot put this youngster in a place of safety until matters are arranged. There are quiet places thereabouts,' says his lordship, 'where nobody would ever dream of looking for him. Make him a shepherd, make him a ploughman for the time being—but get him out of the way. Swend Throxenby is the man—go you to him without a moment's delay.' And here I am —and what say you?"

Swend rose with an air of decision.

"That you have come to the right place and the

right folk! We will so take care of this youngster that the Devil himself should not have him. Now hearken, lads. We will put him this very night in St. Breloc's cell—and if Hood can find him there he is welcome to skin me alive. Ulf, go up and wake him and bring him down. Thorkill, do you get together such matters as he will need, and food and drink for a day. Hurry—we must have him out of here ere day breaks. He will be safe enough then, and later we will take further counsel about it. Master fiddler!—you can tell his lordship that he may rest content; he never said truer word than when he told you that Swend Throxenby knows the secrets of the land he lives in!"

And the old man, gratified and chuckling, motioned to the fiddler to fill his glass.

CHAPTER XI

ST. BRELOC'S CELL

ALAN, roused out of a sleep which was all the sounder because of the soft bed and lavender-scented sheets into which he had been put, had but one idea in his mind as he sat up and stared at Olaf's great figure dimly seen in the faint glow of the rushlight which the giant carried.

"So they have come?" he said, stifling a yawn. "Well—I am only sorry that you and yours should be troubled. I ought not to have come here."

Olaf laughed.

"We will cry out when we are hurt. They—by which, of course, you mean Hood and his rabble—are not yet come, but they may come at any moment. So we must put you before daybreak where nobody can find you. Come downstairs; you will find a friend there."

Alan looked at him as he hurried on his clothes.

"The fiddler?"

"No other. Hood is in Scarborough—or was. Maybe he is on his way. But we shall hear him if he is—Hartas Dring is still on the turf-wall, using his ears."

Then he picked up some rugs and pillows from

Alan's bed, and made for the stairway. At its head he looked back and smiled.

"These are to make you a soft place to lie in. The old fellow who said his paters and his aves in the retreat to which you are going, scorned aught but a stone bench, and never had as much as a bed of straw. While you are in his old quarters you may at least be comfortable."

And he strode down the stair, leaving Alan to finish his hasty toilette, which he did with all speed, wondering what new plan they had in their minds for him. And when he went down to the little room in which Swend and Fiddling Dick awaited him, his first question after greeting the fiddler was as to the Peter Knoop plan. Fiddling Dick waved his hand.

"That is all over and done with! Hood has so raised the hue-and-cry that there will not be so much as a twelve-year-old fisher-lad go out of Scarborough harbour this next two weeks, without the Jacks-in-office knowing if he has his full complement of toes and fingers, and whether his eyes are grey or green. The thing now is to do what our good friend and host here says is to be done."

"And that," said Swend, as Olaf and Thorkill came into the doorway, the one laden with his happings and his pillows, the other with a basket in which were various parcels and bottles, "is to go with these lads and be put in a place which is safer than this—though you might lie safely hidden here from any troop that Parson Hood may bring. But

I want to be able to say without any reservation or equivocation that you are not in Throxenby's Toft. And so away with the lads—and leave all else till after."

"The dawn will break in half-an-hour," said Olaf. "Come!"

Alan hurried after the twin brothers, with no more than a handshake between him and the elder men. But as they crossed the stone hall there was Freda at the head of the oaken staircase, a cloak thrown loosely about her night attire, her fair hair falling about her neck and shoulders and far beneath her waist, and shining in the light of the lamp which she held above her head, her eyes large with apprehension.

"What is it? What has happened?" she asked, looking anxiously from one to the other of the faces below. Is it——?"

"It is naught," answered Olaf. "We are going to commend our guest to the care of St. Breloc. Go back to bed, Freda, and if you hear a troop of horse clatter down the lane ere morning rest assured that it will go back as it came."

The girl hesitated a moment, looked at Alan, then at the things which Olaf and Thorkill carried, and seemed relieved. She bent over the stair. "What Olaf and Thorkill have forgotten to provide I will remember to get ready," she said, and smiled, and turned back into the shadow.

"That is for you, Olaf," said Thorkill. "Here in my basket is enough provision for two."

"And here is happing for three," said Olaf. "All the same, she will say we have forgotten something. However, St. Breloc had less, and his cell is not so far away that we cannot smuggle whatever is necessary into it whenever we like. Now let us make haste."

Outside, the great vault of the sky was still of a deep and dark blue, and the stars shone and sparkled through the clear ether of the midsummer night. But far away on the eastern horizon, over the wide waste by the sea beyond the headlands, a long, faint line of grey light was already spreading and deepening, and in the coppices of the neighbouring hillsides the first cheeping and twittering of the birds was coming out on the still air. The brothers glanced at the coming light and hurried Alan out of the toft, over the bridge and into the high-banked lane that led to the church and the village. And Thorkill suddenly uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Pest upon it—the lass was right! I have forgotten to bring a lanthorn. Master Alan, you will have to go lightless till sun-up. That is, unless I go back and fetch one, and flint and steel."

But Olaf motioned him on.

"That you need not. It would never do to show a light up there! They would see it from the top of the hill as they came along. And it will be light as noontide in another hour."

"Where are we going?" asked Alan. "Far or near?"

"Close at hand," replied Olaf. "We are going to

put you where nobody will look for you. You are going into sanctuary."

"The church?"

"Naught else. Or rather, into a certain hole in it, of the existence of which I believe nobody is aware but our family. And it is well that we are in the middle of June, for I doubt not that St. Breloc found his quarters cold enough at all other times."

"And this St. Breloc? Who was he?" asked Alan.

"Some hermit or anchorite or godly man, who hundreds of years ago spent his days in this chamber we are taking you to," answered Olaf, "and never went abroad save at midnight, when, so the story goes, he used to wander amongst the graves in the churchyard."

"Where, they say, his ghost wanders now," said Thorkill. "Only none of us have ever seen it."

"Except a few old women," observed Olaf. "Now here we are at the end of the churchyard wall. Over here, Thorkill, and keep at the back of the church until we come to the chancel door."

Clambering up the high bank which closed in the road from the village the three climbed over the wall of the churchyard, and Alan saw before him above the dark yew-trees the high gable of the chancel, the higher roof of the nave beyond it, and at the western end of the nave the battlemented tower, which looked lower than it really was because of its breadth and width. Underneath the thick branches of an elm which stood in front of the little chancel door and rose high above its roof,

Olaf paused and began to search his pockets for keys. Thorkill suddenly started.

"Hush. Keep the keys quiet, Ulf. I thought I heard horses galloping."

"If so we can hear better when we come to the top of the tower," said Olaf, unlocking the door. "The thing to do is to get under St. Breloc's protection. In with you both!"

The church was chill and cold. The stone walls, as Alan was to find out later, were of a mighty thickness, and they were so hemmed in by elm and yew and beech, and so covered with old ivy, that no sun could warm them. And in addition to the chill air and the silence there was an odour of antiquity and of mould and of close air, for in those times the churches were rarely opened between Sunday and Sunday, and such ventilation as there was came only through cracked panes of glass in the leaded windows.

"This is but a poor exchange for the warmth of a feather bed," said Olaf, as he took Alan by the arm to lead him forward, "but it is better than the open wold or a dungeon in York Castle. Thorkill, set down your basket and lead the way—we can fetch up the things afterwards. First, up the tower to see if there is more to be heard of that galloping."

Alan let them lead him over the uneven flooring of the chancel and the nave. Already the darkness within the church was decreasing before the approaching day; a grey light came stealing over the east window. He began to make out shapes in the

gloom; the arch of the chancel, the pillars which separated the nave from the north and south aisles; finally the great arch beneath the tower. Olaf paused at a narrow door which was set in the wall at the foot of one of the great buttresses. Once more he produced his keys. There was a great scraping and squeaking of rusty iron; then came a rush of air, pregnant with the smell of long undisturbed dust and cobwebs, and Alan made out a narrow stairway.

"Go you up first, Thorkill," said Olaf, "and you, Alan, hang on to his waistband and mind your head —this stair was not built for six-foot men. To the roof, Thorkill."

Toiling painfully upward in the darkness, Alan counted the steps, which were much hollowed out in the middle. At the forty-fifth Thorkill tapped on a door.

"That is where St. Breloc kept his vigils and where you will keep yours," said he. "But where yours may be for a day or two his were for many a long year. Now for the tower top, from which, they say, the old hermit used to look abroad upon the sinful world for which he prayed. And mind your head more than ever, for the roof becomes lower the higher we get."

At fifty steps more they came out upon the leaded roof of the tower, the grey dawn had broken, and broad shafts of light were sweeping across the sky and heralding the rising of the sun. On the high ground on each side of the valley the trees now

stood clearly outlined against the sky. Glad to stretch his limbs after the cramping climb up the winding stair Alan advanced to the parapet to look around him. But Olaf drew him back.

"Keep close behind the buttress of one of these pinnacles," he said. "We must show no head above the battlements, lest any of the village folk should be up at an earlier hour than usual. What is it, Thorkill?"

For Thorkill, who had crept forward to the north-east angle of the tower, had turned and was holding up his hand.

"Listen!"

Alan strained his ears and heard nothing. But in another moment the brothers looked at each other and nodded.

"Horsemen!" said Olaf. "A good dozen of them. They are on the high road yet. Now listen, both of you, I must away back and be there to meet them. Do you, Thorkill, stay here with Alan for the time being. Here are the keys—when I am gone, lock the chancel door after me. Show Alan all there is for him to see. And don't be seen yourself about the churchyard, Thorkill, until those fellows are off again. And you, Alan, when he leaves you, keep close until one of us comes."

And he hurried away down the stair, leaving Alan and Thorkill hidden behind the pinnacles, staring across the waking land in the direction from which the sound of the advancing troop came clearer

and clearer with the slight wind that blew from off the sea.

"How soon will they be here?" asked Alan.

"In half an hour or so," replied Thorkill. "They are a good four or five miles off—sound carries a long way in these parts. Now while we are here, let me tell you that while you are imprisoned in this old church tower you can always get fresh air up here on the leads, but don't on any account show your noddle over the top of the parapet, for as sure as fate if you do some old gaffer or gammer in the village street will chance to look up at that moment and see it. And then they will say St. Breloc is come again, or some work of that sort, and they will plague my father to death to let some of them search the tower. But let us go down, and I will show you your quarters."

It was almost as hard work to go down as to climb up, for the cobwebs hung in great festoons from the roof, and the worn stairs were thick with dust and with the twigs and straw which the jackdaws had carried in to make their nests. Thorkill objurgated dust, dirt, birds, and spiders.

"Had we thought of it we might have brought a broom to sweep all this muck away out of one of these loop-holes," said he. "I doubt if any of us have been up this tower these five years. None but ourselves ever climb it. Now for the saint's parlour —these keys and the locks they fit into would have been the better for a touch of an oiled feather.

There—walk into your prison, or place of refuge, or whatever you like to call it."

He forced open the door and stood aside for Alan to pass into a chamber which seemed to fill the whole middle space of the tower. It was lighted on three sides by round-headed windows, from which whatever had been there, whether rough glass or wooden slats, had gone; on the fourth side was a small circular opening at about the height of a man's middle, through which the occupant of the chamber could see the altar in the chancel, but naught else of the church nor of the people in it. Between the boarded floor and the raftered roof high above it there was nothing but bare wall of undressed stone. In one corner a number of flints and pebbles lay spread out as if to make the foundation of a rude bed; set against the wall beneath the opening into the nave stood an ancient oak chest, clamped with wrought iron work much worn and eaten by rust. And in the opposite angle of the tower to that at which they had entered was another door, so small and narrow that it looked impossible for aught but a child to pass through it.

"This," said Thorkill, sniffing at the dust and the smell of the birds, who had flocked out of the open arches as he and Alan came in, "this was for years the abode of St. Breloc, who, they say, lived in the fourteenth century which, to be sure, is a long time ago, when folk had different tastes to what they have now. My father could tell you more about him than I can, but as I understand it, the old fellow

had been a notorious sea-pirate in his time, and had cut throats and taken purses on the high seas. Then he became pious, and sore grieved for his sins, and he persuaded the parson of Cransthorpe, who was, of course, a Throxenby, to let him live in this tower and do penance for them, and they say that the opening which you see there was broken out and made as it is, like a funnel, so that the saint, as he had become by that time, I suppose, could see the priest say his Mass at the altar yonder, but could see naught else. And this tower he had to himself, for I know not how many years. That bed of stones was where he slept; they say, though, that he spread sheep-skins on it, which shows that he had some sense left. And the tower top was free to him, as it is to you, so long as you don't show yourself. It may be that he was content, and no doubt, he had much to think about, having been Berserker, and I know not what else."

"And his food and drink, how came he by them?" asked Alan.

Thorkill pointed to the little door.

"There is another stair which leads down to the churchyard," he replied. "Whether it was that the old saint had made over to the parson of that time all the money that he had gained on the seas or not, it is certain, according to the story, that he was treated with great consideration, and all his wishes were attended to. And 'tis said that in accordance with those wishes there was placed at the foot of that stair every day a loaf of bread and a flagon of

water, and no more, save that at Christmas, at Easter, and at the Ascension there was added to the rations a small portion of wine, so that on those occasions he might make merry at the thought of what Christ had done for him. And talking of rations, Master Alan, let us go and fetch up yours, and if I can find a broom in the vestry, or wherever such things are kept, I will even do maid's work, and sweep out this floor for your comfort, for it seems to me that it has never been swept since St. Breloc went to heaven, and that, to be sure, is a good four hundred years ago."

So they went down into the gloomy church again, and Thorkill locked the chancel door, as Olaf had bidden, and they hunted about and found two brooms of birch twigs, and returning swept out the accumulated dirt, and after the dust had settled, carried up the rugs and the blankets and pillows which Olaf had provided, and the basket of provisions that Thorkill had brought, and to hansel the new abode they ate and drank, and wondered what was going on at the farmstead.

"They will get naught out of our people," said Thorkill. "All our folk know how to keep their mouths shut when there is need. By this time Olaf or my father should have sent them about their business. Come up to the leads again; if we hide behind the pinnacles we can see into the toft."

When they crept out on the leads sunrise had come and the land was filled with golden light. On every side the morning mists were rolling away from

the undulations of the Wolds; far away beyond the mouth of the valley they saw the sea, blazing as with molten fire. Grey smoke wreaths were beginning to curl up from the chimneys of the village, and in the barn-yard of the toft the cocks were crowing lustily. But neither gave attention to these morning matters; bestowing themselves with caution behind the weather-worn pinnacles they looked across the elms and beeches beneath, to the gate of the farmstead, where a troop of horsemen was gathered at the edge of the moat. Thorkill laughed softly.

"There is to be no admittance to the toft," said he. "See you, the bridge is drawn up. That is Olaf's work. And there is my father parleying with them over the wall."

Alan gazed with interest at the tall figure of Swend Throxenby, who, with Olaf at his side, was evidently talking to two men whose horses stood somewhat in advance of the rest of the troop. One of the men he recognised as Hood, the other from the smartness of his dress and his plumed hat, he took to be a cavalier.

"I see Hood!" said Thorkill. "Now, if we only had him here we would hang him from one of these battlements. Ah! they have got their answer and they are off."

Alan stared in surprise as the troopers wheeled their horses about and came back up the lane.

"So soon!" he exclaimed. "I thought they would have searched the farmstead."

Thorkill shook his head and laughed.

"No man will enter Throxenby's Toft if my father wills otherwise," he said. "They have had their answer. Keep close and let me see where they go."

And he went down on all fours, and crawling across the leads looked out through one of the square apertures, which had been left in the parapet to carry away the rain by the projecting gargoyles. After a time he turned his face to Alan and smiled.

"As I thought, they have stopped at the inn. Some of them are knocking at the door, which, to be sure, it not yet open. And Hood and the officers are walking their horses about at the foot of the bridge, and by their actions appear to be arguing some matter. Now they will hang around the inn until they have had what ale they want, and this is the time for me to get back to the toft. Come down and lock the door on me."

In the cavernous nave, silent and gloomy enough in spite of the sunlight which flooded the windows, Thorkill looked around him and shrugged his shoulders.

"You will find it dull and dreary in this old church, I fear," he said.

"But needs must when the devil drives. Keep close to St. Breloc when I am gone, lest any one should come prowling about the churchyard and peep in through a keyhole, or a broken window. And since you are a bookworm, know that in the old chest you saw up the tower there are books and matters

that may be worth examining. Many's the time Ulf and I have tossed them over when we were lads."

"That is good hearing," said Alan. "I was thinking that the time would hang heavy on my hands."

"As to that, one or other of us will come and bear you company if only these fellows go clear away," said Thorkill. "We have another key to the chancel, so don't be surprised if some of us drop in on you unawares. Now let me slip out and down the lane while these fellows are drinking."

Alan let him out, and locking the chancel door, went back to the chamber in the tower. He had hidden in some wild places, in woods and caves, and in the ruins of old castles and houses, but to find himself the sole tenant of an ancient church was a new and strange experience. He gazed about him at the old tombs and monuments, at the slabs from which the brasses had been torn by sacrilegious hands whose owners cared naught for the sanctity of the dead, and the stone figures of knights in armour and chain mail which lay in the arched recesses of the aisles, and the silence and the spirit of the place so impressed him that when he reached the turn of the stair which admitted to his sanctuary, he would not have been surprised to find the ghost of St. Breloc waiting to receive him. But there was naught there but a great owl which had maintained its place when all the other birds flew out, and now sat in a recess in the darkest corner, immovable as the grotesquely carved corbels without, its yellow eyes

glaring steadily at the intruder. Alan gave it a friendly nod; it was at any rate a living thing.

"Rest you quiet, good master owl," said he. "I am glad of your company."

Then he raised the heavy lid of the old oak chest and looked at the books, of which Thorkill had spoken. The chest was full of books, folios, and quartos and octavos. Some were bound in horn leather, and some in sheepskin, which had once been white; some were tied up with stout tapes now worn and rotting to pieces; some were fastened with clasps of metal on which the damp and the rust had done its work. And amongst these forlorn and desolate volumes there were parchments and papers, with the remnants of ribbons and seals attaching to them, and with them were mangled fragments of silks and stuffs, the colour of which had long since faded, but which, from certain signs and emblems still remaining on them, had undoubtedly been parts of the ancient vestments. And there was a fine odour of damp, decay, and mould over everything.

Alan gazed at these things with speculative eyes.

"Here is matter for a lover of other times," he muttered. "It is evident that my good host is more of a practical man of the world than a bibliophile, or he would have had these to the toft, and put them in order and in safe keeping. However, if he had done so I should have found naught to do."

And he set to work to disencumber the old chest of its contents, and to arrange the books in rows according to their size, and making free with certain cloths

which he found in the provision basket, he tenderly rubbed away the mould from the brown and yellow backs, grieving for the ill-treated things as if they had been neglected children. And there were so many volumes, and such a number of papers and parchments, and Alan was so much a lover of these matters, and must needs dip into first one and then another book or document, that the sun had crossed from east to west before he was aware of its passage. He was still absorbed in his task when a step on the stair made him turn quickly, to find Freda watching him from the doorway with a smile on her lips.

CHAPTER XII

FREDA VISITS ST. BRELOC

IF ALAN had done what his heart and inclinations prompted him to do, he would have poured out his tale of love to Freda there and then, for the sight of her coming in upon him in all her young beauty in that desolate place, set him afire on the instant, and brought him to his feet from amidst the dust and mould with glad eyes and a hot face. It was only the remembrance of his desperate condition, his uncertain fortune, his doubtful future, that made him refrain from giving her livelier proof of the joy with which he received her. As it was, the girl was quick to see and to understand.

"So you have found something with which to busy yourself?" she said, as she came into the chamber and set down a basket. "It must be long since any of us ever opened that old chest."

"You have been unkind to these poor things," said Alan, glad to have something else than his feelings to talk about. "They deserve a better fate than to be left here in this gloomy tower, in which they will surely rot to pieces like prisoners left in a dungeon. If they were mine I should treasure them."

"My father shall give them to you," said Freda.

"He is more a man of horses and dogs and sheep and cattle than of books and papers."

Alan shook his head. He was making a couch for the girl to sit on out of his rugs and pillows, and he looked at her quizzically as she seated herself.

"That is generous of you, and would be in him. But what use is it to give aught to a man that has nothing? I might quote Scripture on that point, but there is no need, since you are probably as well aware as I am, that from him that has naught all shall be taken away. A crust of bread and a truckle bed—or plain straw—seems to be what I am like to be given!"

"That is wicked talk—but I believe you are jesting. You are not—I mean you ought not—to talk like that. For anything you know your affairs may be mending. That is what I came to talk to you about; they thought it would be safer for me to venture in broad daylight than for any of the others."

Alan shut down the lid of the chest and took his seat upon it.

"If my affairs are mending it will be through the good friends I have found of late," he said. "And I shall feel less bitter as I see more of their goodness. There—I won't even jest. It was good—kind of you to come. And you were to tell me—what?"

"That the men who came with Hood are gone. They were soldiers from Scarborough. Their officer, Captain Falconer, is known to my father, and he asked but one question—if you were in the toft. When my father answered that you were not, he

was satisfied, and ordered his men away. Then Hood was angry, and wanted to ask questions, and to have the place searched, but Captain Falconer said that my father's word was sufficient for him, and he bade his men turn their horses' heads, and so they went off, with Hood still protesting that they had done naught. And Thurstan Stringer, who manages the inn, says that Captain Falconer and Hood had high words before his house while the troopers were refreshing themselves, and he heard Hood say that he would make complaint of their negligence, and Captain Falconer told him that he might complain to the King himself if he pleased. And when they rode away, Hood rode alone."

"Then they are gone, horse and man?"

"Yes, but my father and Olaf and Thorkill think that you had best remain hidden for at any rate to-day and to-morrow, for they do not trust Hood, and they think he may use spies."

"I will do aught that your father and brothers wish," said Alan. And in his heart he said: "I would stay here for ever if I were only assured that you would come and see me every day." But aloud he added: "You know that I am in their hands; and, indeed, I am grateful to them, whatever they do with me."

Freda saw something—or everything—that he had in his mind, and she suddenly opened the basket which she had carried in with her.

"See what I have brought you!" she said. "Fresh cheesecakes, and made by myself! Eat one, and I

will tell you what my father thinks is best to be done."

"Did you make these for me?" he asked bluntly, taking the cheesecake which she offered him. "If you did, then——"

"Then what?"

"No matter. I will tell you some other day. But did you?"

"I will tell you that some other day," she answered demurely. "Besides, you should never ask questions about presents—it is bad manners. Now eat your cheesecake, and listen to what I have to say. There has been a family council about you."

"In which you joined?"

"I said—a family council. And it was not thought necessary in view of what Fiddling Dick said that you should leave England."

Alan looked up quickly with his mouth full of cheesecake.

"I am much less anxious to leave England than I was," he observed. "If things were not as they are I should be something more than glad to stay in England. I mean—to stay hereabouts."

"Fiddling Dick thinks you would be no better off on the Continent than you would here."

"Fiddling Dick is my very kind friend. But he forgets that on the Continent I should be allowed to keep my head on my shoulders. What has he got in his mind?"

"An idea that things will come all right."

"Ah! Well, it is not necessary to know that fiddler

for more than ten minutes to discover that he is a man of highly optimistic views. And so because of his notions you all think I ought to—remain hereabouts?"

"It was thought that it was not necessary to run away if you are as safe here as there."

"Quite so. Leaving the 'if' out of the question, where am I to stay, then? Here, with St. Breloc's ghost for company, until some problematical moment when I may be able to show my face amongst men again?"

Freda looked at him gravely.

"You promised that you would not jest," said she. "My father has thought of a plan. Listen. My uncle —my mother's brother—Michael Burton, has a farm in one of the loneliest parts of the Wolds, near Givendale. It is so lonely that one might call it out of the world. My father thinks that you might go there for a time. There you would be safe."

"I had much rather stay where I am!" thought Alan. But he bowed his head submissively and only said: "I will do whatever your father wishes. But shall I not, perhaps, cause trouble to your uncle?"

"Not if you go as he thinks you might—professing to be a young man who wants to learn sheep-farming as it is practised on the Wolds. No one would suspect."

"I will go. I am always ready to learn anything useful. And—and then, I suppose, I shall not see you for—I do not know how long!"

Freda looked into her basket.

"It is not so far away, after all. One or other of us is always riding across country to see my uncle. He is an old bachelor, and is sometimes glad of a visit."

"Promise me that you will come to see him every week, and I will be the most model farm-pupil that ever was!" exclaimed Alan eagerly.

"I shall promise nothing of the sort," answered Freda, and began to unpack the basket. "And I must go. Here are certain things that the boys forgot to bring this morning. And I have further news for you. Olaf says that it is more than should be expected of flesh and blood that you should spend the night alone in this old church, and so he is coming to spend it with you. When it is well dark he will come and bring his bed with him. Now, I am going. And I may tell my father that you will go to Uncle Michael?"

"You may tell him that—yes. Because—because," said Alan. "I think——"

But there he stopped and looked at her.

"You think what?"

"I think that you would rather I were here in England than across the sea. Is it not so?"

But Freda only gave him a swift glance as she slipped away down the stair. He heard her run across the church; he heard the clang of the chancel door, and he turned with a smile and a sigh to the old books.

CHAPTER XIII

MANŒUVRES OF PARSON HOOD

IT SO chanced that the officer, one Captain Falconer, who commanded the troopers despatched to arrest Alan on Hood's information, was not only a friend and admirer of Swend Throxenby, but was also none too much in love with the job entrusted to him. And when he had asked Swend the simple question as to whether the young Earl of Stirthes was in his house or not, and had got the parson-farmer's direct answer, he conceived that he had done his duty at Throxenby's Toft, and bade his men, who were of like kidney to himself, to right about face and be off again. Whereupon Hood fell foul of him and began to speak his mind.

"Here is a nice way of carrying out your orders! I tell you that the man is here, and because yonder groat oaf, who is neither fish nor flesh, says he is not, you take his word!" he growled.

"I take the word of a man I know to be honest," retorted Falconer. "Mr. Throxenby says the lad is not in his house nor on his premises, and I believe him."

"You should have searched. All men will lie if it

suits them. At any rate you might have made sure if the pony that he borrowed had been returned or not. If it is within that farmstead then he brought it there and he is somewhere about."

"Find him, then!"

"That was for you to do. What else did you come for?"

"Not to take orders from you. Master Hood! You say positively that the young earl is at Throxenby's Toft, and out we come to take him there. He is not there, and you are in the wrong. It is not our work to find him, but yours to point him out. I have no orders to hunt through every coppice in the hillsides, and in every hedgerow in the meadows. I and my men have done what we were ordered to do, which was to accompany you and to bring the young man in when you pointed him out. You have not found him where you said he would be found, and we are going back. Our duty is done."

"We will see about that. It is child's play to ride out all this way and to turn back at the first covert because you draw it blank. What am I to do without your help?"

"Help yourself! It seems to be a game that you are fond of. Forward, men!—and if you must needs drink at the ale-house, waste no more time than is necessary in emptying your pots."

And he rode away from Hood and waited impatiently while the troopers clustered about the inn door, and the informer chafed and fumed, realising that he was being baulked of his rightful prey. At

last he approached Falconer on the bridge, and assumed a new tone.

"I will stake all I have that the fellow is hereabouts," he said. "Stand by me with your men and let us search the farmstead and the village, and I will give you—well, say, fifty pounds of the money offered for him."

Falconer stared over his horse's ears at him and was silent.

"Well, then, a hundred," said Hood, misunderstanding him.

Falconer drove his horse forward with a sharp thrust of his spur.

"Say that again, and I shall roll you out of your saddle, and have you thrown into the horse-pond there! Do you think I would touch blood-money? Now, men, come on!"

And in another moment the scarcely wakened villagers saw the troops re-ascending the hill down which they had ridden only half-an-hour before. A hundred yards in their rear rode Hood, angry, sullen, wondering what to do next.

He made no attempt to rejoin Falconer and his men. During the ride from Scarborough he had seen and heard enough to show him that none of them had any relish for the task imposed upon them. He saw now how he had been outwitted. There had been no orders to Falconer in respect of searching for or seeking out; all that he had received in the way of instruction was a curt command to go with Hood, and to arrest the man whom Hood would

point out. And Hood was unable to point out any man, and though he thoroughly believed that the young Earl of Stirthes was safely hidden in or somewhere about Throxenby's Toft, he knew that for all he could do he was as safe as if he had been over in Antwerp or Heidelberg or in the East Indies.

But Hood was an avaricious and covetous man, and the remembrance of the blow which Alan had dealt him in the back lane behind York Castle was still green in his mind. He must have his revenge for that blow, and he would welcome the thousand pounds in good gold. Since his gown had been pulled over his ears for certain unclerical conduct he had grown weary of York, and he longed to exchange it for a sphere of action in which nothing would be known of his record. With a thousand pounds in his possession he would be free to go where he liked, and to start a new career. And he had learnt enough to know that just then the Government was particularly anxious to lay by the heels such Jacobite leaders as it could catch, for Charles Edward was still safely eluding it, and an example must be made of somebody of note and name if it were only a landless and penniless young peer. Wherefore Hood was not minded to let his quarry slip him, and he began to cast about in his wits to devise some means whereby he could take Alan single-handed, or at any rate, without the aid of soldiers, who, it was evident, were not enamoured of the job of hunting down brave men who had proved their mettle in open field.

He drew rein at the top of the hill, on the spot where Alan had taken his first view of the valley, and from behind a screen of bushes looked down on village and toft and considered his plans. And he observed, first of all, that on each side of the narrow valley there was plenty of cover in the shape of spinney and hedgerow and plantation, and he thanked such stars as he believed in that it was the season of leaves, and that the trees and bushes were thick with them. He noted, also, that there were but two exits from the toft, and that it was possible to keep both in sight from the high ground on which he then lingered; no one, he was quick to perceive, could go into Throxenby's farmstead or pass out of it unseen by a sharp observer, at any rate while daylight lasted. In that clear atmosphere one could distinguish faces at half-a-mile's distance.

"And after dusk it shall go hard but I come at closer quarters," he muttered, as he turned his beast's head along the lane towards the coast. "In or about there the black-faced youngster is, and I am not going to lose him this time whatever I did before."

The first thing was to get rid of the horse. It would be useful enough when the time came, but it was only in the way of a man who wanted to sneak about hedgerows and hide behind bushes; nevertheless, he must find stabling and accommodation for it as near at hand as possible.

"No use in going back to the village and putting

the beast up there," he said. "The news of it would be in the ears of Swend Throxenby and those long-legged lads of his within the hour. And most of the folk are doubtless either on his hand or in his pay."

In the end he followed the lane until it brought him out on the high road, which ran along the head of the cliffs from Filey towards Bridlington. And remembering that when he was last in those parts he had drawn rein at a wayside alehouse somewhat south of where he then stood, he went down the road to it, and finding it still standing, bargained with the landlord for the stabling of his steed for a few hours. After which, bethinking him that he might have a long vigil before him, he made a breakfast of such fare as the folk had to give, and filled his pockets with bread and cheese in view of future hunger. And then, taking advantage of all the cover he could find, he made his way back to the lane which overlooked the valley, and having found a place wherein he could hide himself with little chance of detection, sat down to keep vigilant watch upon the two entrances to the toft.

The slow moving summer day went on; the cattle and sheep on the hillsides and in the valley seemed inclined for nothing but laziness and sleep in the warm sunshine; if he had aught else in hand Hood would have yielded to the never-ceasing hum and buzz of the myriad insects in the hedgerow, and of the bees which ceaselessly rifled the honeysuckle, and have slept as sound as any ox or steer. But his

thoughts were not of self-indulgence nor of slumber, but of his thousand pounds, and his eyes were never off the objects of his attention.

There was little to see. Now and then a farm-hand went in or out of the toft; at noon some of the labourers came down the opposite hillside from a field in which they had been hoeing turnips, and went in for dinner. Later on he saw them go back to their labours; he had counted them going in and he counted them coming out, lest the man he wanted should be amongst them in disguise of such garments as labourers wore. But they were the same in number, and he watched them climb the hill again to the turnip field, and take up their hoes, and leisurely resume their work amongst the thin lines of fresh green which showed like fine strings stretched across the brown-red carpet of the soil. Still later he saw the boy, Gamel, appear on the top of the turf-wall beneath the overarching elms; he had a rod and line and began to fish, and whenever he drew a fish out of the dark moat Hood saw the silver-like gleam of its wet sides as the angler swung it up from the water.

But there was naught to be seen of Alan. From his hiding-place Hood could see into a part of the toft, and during the morning he had caught glimpses of Ulf and Thorkill, moving about fold and stock-yard, and once he had seen Swend himself come out upon the green in front of the house to look at a horse which a lad brought out of the stables. It was plain that the ordinary life of the farmstead was go-

ing on in the usual fashion of that, the slack time of the summer. If the refugee was in the keeping of the Throxenbys, they were holding him close. Hood had been in hopes that, knowing the coast was clear, Alan might have shown himself, and he began to be afraid that the toft folk had possibly helped him forward in his flight. There were other places on the coast than Scarborough from which one could escape to the Continent. By making a wide circuit around country by way of Pickering and Levisham and Goathland, there was Whitby to be reached, and from Whitby ships sailed in plenty to Sweden and Norway and Denmark, and the ports of the Low Countries. And southward there was Hull, with a trade only less than that of London and of Bristol. A man wishful to leave England could find a dozen sea-going vessels there at any time. And, more likely still, because closer at hand was Bridlington, the grey towers of whose ancient Priory the spy could see across the undulating land from his perch under the June roses and the sweet-smelling honeysuckle. It might be that the Throxenbys had smuggled Alan across to Bridlington, and that he had found a convenient ship lying at the Quay, and was even now slipping away to safety across the North Sea.

Nevertheless, Hood kept up his vigilant watch on the toft. He would give a day and a night to the business; if he had seen naught to arouse his further suspicions by next morning he would go back to his horse, ride into Bridlington and make enquiries

there. It was a small place, and the shipping of even one stranger would scarce pass without notice amongst the men who hung about the wall of the harbour. So he went on watching.

In the later half of the afternoon Hood saw Freda pass out of the toft, carrying a basket. He knew her for Swend Throxenby's lass, because he had seen her at York, and at the Barnaby Fair at Boroughbridge; accordingly he watched her with interest. He saw that the basket which she carried was heavy, from the way in which she carried it. He lost sight of her as she traversed the high-banked lane between the farmstead and the village; presently he saw her again as she threaded her way beneath the elms and yews in the churchyard. He saw that she did not pass out of the churchyard at the other side, as she would have done had she been going into the village, therefore, concluded Hood, she had gone into the church.

After some time had elapsed Freda reappeared beneath the dark yew-trees. The spy was quick to observe that she now swung her basket lightly in her hand; therefore, said he to himself, she had emptied it in the church. He watched her disappear in the lane, he saw her reappear where the drawbridge crossed the moat; he saw her enter the toft. Then he began to think, and to ponder, and to endeavour to put two and two together; finally, with great care, he removed himself to a more convenient place along the hedgerow, and took up a position from which he could look directly down upon the

church tower. And before sunset came he was rewarded for his pains.

Olaf and Thorkill had forgotten two things of great importance when they inducted Alan to his tenancy of the tower. In warning him about showing himself on the leads they had only thought of the probabilities of his being seen from the village in the valley; they had forgotten that the valley, being of such narrow dimensions, and its banks so high and steep, anyone posted on top of the opposing hillsides could look down upon the summit of the tower as easily as he could look upon the churchyard at its foot. From Hood's new position he saw the leads, the high parapet, and its four pinnacles; he could even see the black opening of the stair which led from floor to summit. And about the time that the sun was dipping to its rest behind the high ridges and the coppice-crowned hill that rose westward, Hood saw a man emerge from the doorway of the stair, and taking great precaution not to be seen above the battlements, seat himself in an angle of the parapet and begin to read in a great book which he had carried up with him.

"I would stake the thousand pounds that I am going to get against a groat that that is he!" exclaimed Hood. "I have him! We will see what Master Falconer has to say to this. So that is where they bestowed him, in their mouldy old church, which, doubtless, is never entered from one Sunday to another, and maybe not then. Well, and now what am I to do?"

For it was obvious that there was much to be done. He could not go down and drag Alan out of his retreat without help. Without doubt there was some scheme in progress between him and the Throxenbys. There was nothing for it but to wait and watch until he knew what that scheme was.

The further waiting and watching made Hood conversant with the second thing which Olaf and Thorkill had forgotten. The chamber in the church tower which they called St. Breloc's Cell was lighted by three round-arched windows, now bereft of whatever had once filled them, which was, in all likelihood, nothing more than mere slats of wood. These windows were of some size, and fully a yard in width, and more than two yards in depth. And while that on the south side was set in the wall at about the height of a tall man's head, the one which faced it from the north on which side of the valley Hood lay hidden was set much higher in the tower. Consequently, when from his superior point of vantage, he looked down upon the tower he could see through one window and out at the other. In point of fact, he saw through the window a line of sheep following a track along the hillside across the valley. And, therefore, he had no difficulty when Alan descended from the leads in ascertaining it was for the shelter of the chamber which was lighted by these windows, for he presently saw his figure pass and repass between them.

Certain now that his man was there before him,

Hood waited in his hiding-place until nightfall, wondering what to do. According to his notion of what he himself would have done under similar circumstances, Alan probably meant to escape, aided by the Throxenbys under cover of the night. Therefore he must at least find out in which direction the escape was made. If he could get near enough to overhear a chance word or two which would afford a clue he would be satisfied; an hour would bring him to his horse, and in those days of slow travelling and bad roads the loss of an hour was of small consequence. He watched with impatience the daylight fade; now that he had run his fox to earth he wanted to be closer at hand lest it should slip away unseen.

But not until the night had fallen and the first stars appeared did Hood leave his hiding-place. He ate his supper of bread and cheese to pass the time away; he was glad when at last he could move down the hillside toward the river. From the top of the hill he had noticed a ridge of stepping-stones near the angle of the Throxenby enclosure, and at first he made for them, intending to cross by their aid. But caution overruled that instinct; he kept close to hedgerows until he came to a place where the banks of the stream were thickly shaded with willow and alder, and then he took off his footgear and waded over, coming out beneath the wall of the churchyard. And presently having glided round there as quietly as a cat moves when it stalks sparrows, he found himself safely hidden in the thick branches of a yew-

tree which stood opposite the little door that gave admittance to the chancel.

Hood had not been very long in this hiding-place when a man, who carried a great bundle on his back, and who, from his size and bulk, he knew to be one of the twins, came stealthily into the churchyard and let himself into the church. He heard the key grate and scrape as the man opened the door from the outside; he heard it grate and scrape again as it was turned on the inside.

"So now there are two of you!" he thought. "More than any man can tackle single-handed. However, wit was devised for the comfort of the weak."

Presently he slipped out of the shelter of the yew-tree, and began to make a cautious examination of the outer walls of the old church. After his discovery of Alan on the leads, he had observed the character of the building with care, speculating on the chances of effecting an entrance. The ground plan was simple. At the west end stood the four-square tower, with a buttress stair at its north-west corner; then came a high-roofed nave with north and south aisles; then a chancel. And on the north side of the chancel, built out into the churchyard, was a low edifice which Hood took to be a vestry but which was in reality a side chapel built over a vault in which reposed various members of many generations of Throxenbys. Into this chapel a small door opened from the churchyard.

Hood went round the church by way of the tower. Backing away from it into the darkness beneath the

elms he looked up at the unglazed and empty windows in the expectation of seeing some light shown there from within. But though he waited for a considerable time no light appeared. He crept closer to the tower and listened, but heard no voices. Then he came to the conclusion that the inmates had repaired to some other part of the church, probably to the building which he had taken for a vestry, and he proceeded to follow the walls on the north side, expecting and hoping to see some light glimmer through the dull glass of the windows. But the church remained in darkness and it dawned upon Hood that its occupants were not minded to give any signal of their presence.

He went on, examining every window as he came to it, until at last he reached the little door which admitted to the side chapel. And there he made a great discovery.

The door was open. It was more than open—it was slightly ajar. As a matter of fact it was never locked. In ordinary circumstances it remained bolted from one year's end to another. But recently there had been a grave to dig in close proximity to the chapel, and the sexton kept his spade and his mattock amongst the Throxenby tombs, where were also stored many another remnant of old days, and he had gone out by the little door, and had forgotten to make it fast again. And as no one ever went into that part of the church no one had ever noticed that the door was open.

As soon as Hood found that a clear way into

the church was there before him, he summoned up all his powers of caution. He peered through the narrow opening into the chapel, and was met by an impenetrable darkness and an odour of damp and mould and of dead men's bones, of which, in truth, there was a goodly heap in one corner, folk in those days having no great delicacy of feeling about such matters, and thinking no more of a Christian's skull than of a sheep's thigh-bone. But after staring into the place for some time and letting his eyes get used to the darkness, he made out a window, and through a broken pane in it saw a star shining above the yew trees outside. And then he began to see the monuments of the dead and gone Throxenbys shape themselves in heavy outlines against the grey light which gradually established itself in place of the blackness.

Hood opened the door by sections of an inch, fearing lest it should squeak on its presumably rusty hinges. When he had pushed it back to the width of a foot he slid in through the narrow opening with the sinuous movements of a snake and began to feel his way with hands and feet. Before he had gone a yard he reached down in the darkness and noiselessly took off his shoes; beneath him the uneven, mould-pitted flagstones which made the flooring struck cold as ice and gave him lively premonitions of aches and pains on the morrow. But he was now fairly on the scent, and the thought of the thousand pounds warmed his heart and made him indifferent to his feet. Foot by foot, listening for the slightest sound, he made his way out of the chapel into the

nave, and gradually crept towards the west end of the church. And presently he saw the feeble glimmer of a light coming from the half-closed door of the tower stair, and he crept nearer, every nerve on the alert.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GREAT CUP OF ST. PETER

OLAF, having locked the chancel door behind him, and, as he thought, made all safe for the night, lugged his bedding up the stairs of the tower to St. Breloc's Cell, and found Alan sitting amidst his rugs and pillows on the saint's couch of stone—so much being just discernible in the last remnants of twilight. Olaf threw down his load and laughed.

"So you are to follow the good man's example and lie on flints and boulders!" he said. "A corner of the boards, bare as they are, will be softer, I think."

"I have slept on stone and on turf before to-night," replied Alan. "This is at least dry. And I thought that what an old man did a young one might attempt. As one never knows what comes next, one may as well gain all the experience one can."

"There is something in that. Plague on it that we dare not have a light in this gloomy chamber! If it were not that I can fall asleep in an instant and whenever I like—that is, when bedtime comes—I should be like to lose my senses sitting here in the

darkness, expecting to see ghosts and goblins and I know not what trooping up the stair here. There must be a good hundred or so of my forbears sleeping down in the church there; if I were alone I should be afraid of them coming to take a look at a living Throxenby."

"How do you know that they won't as it is?"

"Ah,—ghosts, that is real ghosts, never appear to two folks at the same time! Now if you had been alone here, I would lay something that you had seen rare sights before morning—perhaps St. Breloc himself. We were frightened for you; it would have been a sad matter if we had come in the morning and found you with your hair turned as white as Father Christmas in the mummer's play-acting."

"It would take a good many St. Brelocs to turn my black hair to grey or even to brown, Olaf. I would rather see a ghost than a live enemy."

"That would not I! Flesh and blood I fear no more than I fear the whisk of a cow's tail, but ghosts! And once more I wish we had a light, for now I come to think on it I have brought somewhat for our supper, and how shall we see to eat and drink?"

"Lay it out on the old chest; it will go hard if hands cannot do the work of eyes. All the same, I wish, too, that we had a light, for then I would show you something."

"Show me something? What? St. Breloc's bones!"

"No, but something that may refer to what is perhaps older and more valuable, unless, indeed,

your St. Breloc's bones, wherever they are, can work miracles. I have made a discovery."

"What of? Treasure? I have heard folk say that in these old chuches things are oft found buried. There was a man talked to me one day over a friendly glass at Malton market—I knew not who he was, save that he was a stranger and seemed a scholar—who said that along our East Coast here, there is like some day to be found treasure that was buried by the Spaniards who were shipwrecked in these parts when their Armada was scattered. Is it something of that sort that you have discovered?"

"What I have discovered, Olaf, is naught but a scrap of old parchment. Did—did your sister tell you that she found me busy with the old books and paper which you people have so shamefully left to mould and rot in that ancient chest?"

"She said that you were busily engaged in tidying up your quarters, and that all you needed to be a good housewife was a bib and tucker. And this scrap of old parchment?"

"Heard you ever of an ancestor of yours—such he must have been—called Adrian de Throxenby, who was a priest?"

"That have I! Though his real name was no more Adrian than mine is but was the same as mine—Olaf. He was a monk of St. Mary's Abbey, in York. Moreover, according to the old papers which my father keeps in his private desk—he would show them to you if you care for such things, as you seem to do—he is buried in our chapel at the side of the

chancel. There is a slab in the floor there on which you can just trace his initials and a cross, and a date."

"When did he live, this Adrian, or Olaf?"

"He was one of the monks who were turned out of St. Mary's when they pulled the roof over their heads in King Henry's time. I have heard my father say that they pensioned off such as him."

"Whereupon he doubtless came home to his native village to spend the rest of his days in peace on his six or seven pounds a year—which is about all he would get."

"They would make out for him here. No Throxenby ever saw his own flesh and blood want. But this parchment! What has it got to do with old Olaf or Adrian, as they called him in religion?"

"Now, I wish we had a light. For then I would answer your question by showing you something."

Olaf got off the chest on which he had been sitting with his back against the wall.

"Why, as to that, there is a lanthorn and steel and flint down in the vestry room at the bottom of the tower," he said. "But, to be sure, there are windows in that vestry, and if there are folk about they would see the light and come to peep in to see if the church had got on fire, unless, indeed, which is much more likely, they hurried home to hide their heads under their sheets thinking the Devil had got into the place."

"Then we must wait until day breaks. But now that you have told me about the old monk I think

I have discovered something that may open your eyes and mine, and everybody else's."

"Is is a poor job to wait until morning for that. I like my money down on the nail. I know what can be done. No one without can see a light burned on that stair, for there are no windows. I will fetch up the lanthorn and the flint and steel. Where is your parchment?"

"Safe in my hand. Fetch your light."

Olaf hurried away down the stairs; in a few moments Alan heard him coming back again. The clink of the steel rang out upon the flint; he heard Olaf puff vigorously at the tinder in its iron box. Then a glow of light shone on the rough wall of the stair. "Now, let us see your parchment," said Olaf. "This is safe enough; no one can see aught of this from outside."

Alan went out on the stair carrying a great folio under his arm. It was bound in sheep-skin, but its whiteness had been sore soiled, and its elaborately ornamented sides were as much worn and torn as its great metal clasps were rusted and tarnished. Olaf gazed at it in wonder.

"What is that? Some old Massbook?" he asked.

Alan sat himself down on a round of the stair and motioned Olaf to sit by him. He undid the clasps of the great book with an air of triumph.

"It is a copy of the Gospel. See, what beautiful black letters! And what head and tail-pieces in red and black. And see what rare craft has been used in ornamenting the binding, and, as you see, it has

been stitched with gold cord. And look at the work in these clasps. I cannot make out what metal it is, but it seems to me to be parcel-gilt. What a shame to leave such a triumph of the printer's and the binder's craft to rot in a mouldy old chest—though that would not have been what it is if you had looked after it. Some folk would give its weight in gold for this old book!"

"Find one of such folk, and he shall have it. Why, we have another chest full of books like that at the house. But where is this parchment you spoke of, that has to do with the old monk?"

"Take your time." And Alan slowly turned over the leaves with many a lingering look of admiration at initial letters and colophon, until he came to the *Laus Deo* at the end. "Now look you here, Master Olaf. You see that this book has become so saturated with damp in its unkind receptacle that this which we call the end paper has become parted from the boards—aye, the very boards themselves are falling to pieces, and would have done so but for the clasps!"

"Oh, I see that! I know little of books and have small love for such as I do know, but I care not to see aught ill-treated, whether it be book or beast. We will put these old things in a warmer and a drier place, since you think so much of them."

"That is a good resolution, for books, like men, need light and air for their sustenance. However, if this had not been so badly dealt with, I might not have found what I have found. Look here!"

And from between the damp boards at the end of the old book of Gospels Alan drew out a square of parchment. He held it close to the horn door of the lanthorn, and Olaf gazed at it wonderingly, as if he feared it to be something of magic.

"What is that?" he exclaimed. "I see marks and writings upon it—it is perilously like some of those charms that the wise women give to the servant lasses when they have toothache or want a sweetheart."

Alan laughed.

"This is no charm, Olaf, but a rough drawing, a chart, a map, a plan, made without doubt by your ancestor, Adrian, the monk of St. Mary's in York, in the year 1541. Look you there at the foot. What do you read? 'Adrian de Throxenby, presbyterus, O.S.B.' And there is the date. And why did Adrian, priest, and monk of the order of St. Benedict, make this drawing?"

"Heaven and himself know! What is it all about?"

"Look at it. Here, you see, he outlines what I conceive to be the chancel of this very church of yours. There is the altar—he indicates it by those four lines, within which he has written *Alt.* And on the north side he has made more lines and written within them what I make out to be *Tumba Torketyl,* which means the tomb of Torketyl, who was, I suppose another of you?"

"He was; and his tomb is there on the top side of the chancel, as you say, though the inscription is

so worn that neither you nor I would know that it is Torketyl's. But Torketyl Throxenby's it is, for I have heard my father say so a hundred times, and he knows. But go on! this is bettter work than I had thought of. What else?"

"Well, there, on the south side of the chancel, he has scratched more lines and written across them *Tumba Ulphos*. Yet another of you?"

"Aye, and that is right, too, for as sure as Torketyl is buried on one side so Ulphos lies on the other. By the Mass! this is as good as finding out which earth a fox has run his mask and his brush into! Go on! What more is there?"

"You see the ink—it must have been black enough when Adrian made this map for they had better ink then than we have now, and it has lasted wonderfully well—the ink, I say, is somewhat faded, but do you see that between the altar and the tomb of Torketyl he who drew this chart has pictured the division of the stones, the paving flags, in the chancel. See—your eyes may be keener than mine—are not those the figures, 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5?"

"They are—they are! Faint enough, but I see them plainly as I see this lanthorn! Also I see a line drawn from one of them to where there is more writing. What is that now? it seems to me to be Latin."

"Latin it is, Olaf, and in it lies the secret of this mysterious drawing! See you, the line you speak of is drawn from the stone, or flag, number three, which is about halfway between Torketyl and the high altar, and the writing to which it runs says, *Hic*

dep. cal. mag. Sanc. Pet. Ebor, which is an abbreviated way of writing what in English would be, 'Here is deposited the great chalice, or cup, of St. Peter of York. There!"

Olaf stared at the parchment and then at Alan.

"Heavens above! And what make you of that?"

"I make of that, Olaf, that the good monk most likely brought away with him from York a sacramental vessel of value, which belonged to some church dedicated to St. Peter, and——"

"Church! The Minster! Did you never hear of St. Peter of York? He is the patron saint of this county, though, to be sure, there are two others who are just as good, St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfrid of Ripon, and if truth is spoken they are a deal better, because they are Yorkshire men, which St. Peter certainly was not. St. Peter of York, his great cup! Then that is somewhat that came from the Minster. But—do you think he—old monk Adrian, or Olaf, buried it there—here in our church?"

"Why else did he make this chart? I think he did so bury it, and made this drawing, and put it within the boards of this old book of Gospels, believing that in the days to come somebody would find it, for if he were a pious man he would be sure to think that the old faith would triumph and be revived. And I have remembered since I discovered this scrap of parchment that I have read about the treasures of York Minster, how that when the old religion was driven out, and the sacristies robbed and despoiled,

there was a vast splendour of things disappeared from York which no one could ever account for—sacramental plate of solid gold blazing with jewels, and vestments of cloth of gold set with the most precious stones, and service books of purple vellum, gorgeously illuminated and bound, and reliquaries mounted with diamonds, and croziers and mitres, and I know not what. Where, think you, they went? And is it not likely that some of the monks who were driven away from the city carried off some of these treasures and hid them against the coming of better days. Oh, it seems to me certain that Adrian, the monk, deposited this chalice—great chalice—he calls it here, between the altar and the tomb of Torketyl!"

Olaf groaned loudly.

"Would it were to-morrow—or even daybreak!" he exclaimed.

"Why so?"

"Because I was never a good hand at restraining my curiosity. And I want to see if that same gold chalice is still there."

Alan shook his head.

"That is doubtful. Why, remember that it is two hundred years since Adrian put it there! The flags of your chancel must have been taken up more than once since then."

"I doubt it. I doubt if anything within the church has ever been touched since then, except that the images and such-like were torn down and flung out. And why should any one want to take up the floor? There are no vaults under it. Ah! I must know

what is under that stone. Plague upon it that we cannot go down and take it up!"

"I am willing. Surely no one will be stirring at this time. Do not your villagers go to their beds early?"

"They go to their beds as soon as it is dark. I am not afraid of them; I am thinking of the folk that are after you!"

"But you say they went off this morning?"

"Aye, but some spy or other might return."

"He would scarce be likely to come prowling round the church," said Alan, who was too young not to share in Olaf's curiosity and eagerness to start treasure hunting. "They would be more like to be about the toft. But how should we take up the stones?"

"Easy enough. There are a pick and a crowbar in the chapel by the chancel. Well, let us wait an hour or so, at any rate, until the village is sure to be asleep!"

So they went back into the chamber, having first put out the light, and to while the time away ate and drank of the supper which Olaf had brought with him, and talked of buried treasures and secret hoards, which means that Alan did most of the talking and Olaf the listening. And at last, when there was such a silence all around them that it began to grow oppressive, they lighted the lanthorn again, and crept down to the church, shielding the light within Olaf's jacket. And highly excited, and with hearts beating so loudly that they could hear them

thump within their breasts, they made their way to the chancel and got down on their knees and examined the stones with which it was paved.

"One-two-three-four-five," counted Alan. "This is the stone—halfway, as you see, between Torketyl and the altar. And I think you are right in saying it has not been moved since Adrian's time; it looks as if it had never been moved since it was set in its place, and as if we should never move it."

Olaf handed over the lanthorn, pushing it inside Alan's jacket.

"That we will soon see," he said, and went off for the pick and the crowbar, the exact location of which, behind the buttress wall of the chapel, he knew. "Now for it!" he continued, coming back. "By the Mass!—what news we shall have for them at home if we find aught!"

And he set himself to the task of levering up the flag-stone beneath which, if the parchment spoke truth, lay a treasure such as neither of them had ever set eyes on. That flag-stone had once been ornamented by a brass, but some sacrilegious hand had torn it off long since, and the studs which had held it in place were worn down to the surface level. And the stone itself was so firmly wedged in between its fellow stones that it needed all Olaf's strength to stir it with pick and bar, but at last it came up, and there beneath it was not mould nor bubble nor cemented foundation, but two boards of wood, neatly fitted and white-rotten with age.

Alan grew so excited that he could scarce keep the lanthorn still.

"There! I think you are right, Olaf. Naught has been moved since the monk's time. Up with those boards!"

The boards had swollen with the damp and were as tightly wedged into this socket as the flag-stone which had covered them. But Olaf lugged them out with a mighty tug, and he and Alan bent anxiously over the cavity, wherein lay something wrapped and folded about with what had been part of a cope heavy with golden embroidery.

"Heavens above!" whispered Alan. "We have found it! At least there is something."

"And something that is not of the lightest," said Olaf. "Now for it!" And tearing away the rotten remains of the wrapping he held up, dull and tarnished by its long sepulchre, but still gleaming in the dim light of the lanthorn, a great and massive chalice of gold, the stem and foot of which were thickly set wth pearl and ruby and topaz and amethyst. And for full five minutes the two young men stared at their find in silence, marvelling greatly.

"I wish my father—nay, all our folks had been here!" said Olaf at last.

"And so do I! This is a great moment. Ulf, let us put it back, and in the morning do you fetch them to see how it lay. It has rested safe enough there for two hundred years—it will rest safely there for a few hours longer."

And as that seemed good sense, they laid the

great chalice of St. Peter of York in its resting-place once more, and set the wood and the stone over it again. Still whispering to themselves of this wonderful discovery they went back to the chamber in the tower, never dreaming that from his hiding-place in the chapel Hood had seen and heard all that they had said and done.

CHAPTER XV

IN OLD BRIDLINGTON

HAVING heard everything of the conversation between Olaf and Alan as they sat on the tower stair Hood had gone back to the chapel of the dead Throxenbys and had there prepared himself to be a deeply interested witness of whatever was to take place in the chancel. The ancient tomb of Torketyl de Throxenby stood in an ogee arch in the wall which shut off the chancel from the chapel; it was an easy matter for Hood so to place himself behind it that he could see what went on with no danger of being seen himself. He felt no great assurance that the stone flooring which lay between Torketyl's monument and the altar had remained undisturbed, and he was as surprised as Olaf himself when the great gold cup was disinterred from its hiding-place. Here, indeed, was a prize!—a far greater prize than the proscribed Earl of Stirthes.

When the young men replaced the chalice in its bed Hood wondered at their foolishness. Now it was as good as his; he felt like to laughing aloud when he thought of the looks of dismay which they would turn on each other in the morning. For there would be no chalice there when they brought Swend

to witness its disinterment. Swend would tell them that they had been dreaming. But whatever he said or did, or they said or did, would not matter to him, Hood—by that time he and the ancient cup of St. Peter would be far away. Let St. Peter himself try to stop him if he could!

He waited for a long time in the darkness of the chapel before he stirred from his hiding-place behind the carved and crumbling pillars that supported the canopy under which reposed old Torketyl's alabaster figure. There was a notion in his mind. He was clever at putting himself in other people's places, and he had been considering what he would have done if he had occupied Olaf's place in the scheme of that night's happenings. Having locked the chancel door from within, he would probably have left the key in the lock. Secure in the belief that no one else could enter the church he would almost certainly have taken no trouble about removing the key from the door of the stair which led up the tower. Therefore, it was all the more likely that the two keys were to be found in their respective locks. If they were, all the better for him.

In the midst of a dead silence Hood at length crept out of his hiding-place, still in his shoeless state. The coldness of the stones on which he had stood so long had almost benumbed his limbs from toe to thigh, but he forgot or ignored it, being warmed to ecstasy by the thought of the gold chalice and the glittering stones with which it was inset. He moved noiselessly across the chancel to its little

door; there, sure enough, was the key. He drew it out of the lock with infinite precaution against sound. It was a rudely-fashioned thing, and of considerable weight, and having no desire to encumber himself with it, he re-crossed the chancel and feeling for an empty space amongst the decorations of Torketyl's tomb, placed it therein as noiselessly as if he were depositing a feather on a bed of down.

That done, Hood stole down the centre of the church until he came to the foot of the tower stairway. He went down on hands and knees there and took his time in creeping close to the door. Just as he had expected, the lads had left the door ajar, and there was the key on the outer side of it. Crouching on the threshold like one of the grotesque figures on the parapet above, Hood listened intently. In the silence which was so deep as to be oppressive he heard somebody snoring.

"Olaf!" he said to himself. "Now if I could but be sure of the other! He is the sort that is like to be kept awake by the uncertainties of his situation."

However, he reflected that if Alan did happen to be awake, the noise which Olaf was making, thereby filling the chamber with sounds as deep as those of a bassoon, would drown the scraping of iron on iron, and he prepared to make the two prisoners. He turned the key a little, and it made scarcely a sound, in spite of the rust, but then came a more difficult matter. The door must needs creak, for it was a hundred thousand to one that it had never been oiled for many a long year. But drawn into its

frame and locked it must be, for Hood meant to take every advantage that he could, and it would be to his good if he could secure Alan and Olaf in the tower for sometime longer than they had intended to occupy it. He had examined the old church so closely as he sat looking down on it from the hill top that he knew there was no way by which anybody locked up in the tower could escape, except by the little turret at the north-west angle, and it was much to be doubted if that happened to be accessible. From the open windows of the chamber in which he knew the lads to be asleep it was a good fifty feet drop to the ground—not even Olaf would dare to attempt that. And so waiting until an unusually loud and long snore boomed forth from the giant's nose, Hood drew the door quickly into its place, turned the key, took the key out and dropped it into his pocket, and having no more need of caution went swiftly back to the chancel arch and possessed himself of the tools which Olaf had placed there an hour previously. Now, at any rate, he could handle one of his two prizes!

"If only that numskull of a redcoat had remained at my orders!" he muttered. "Then we should have despatched both businesses at one stroke. But my wits are going a wool-gathering! If Falconer had stopped then I should never have been alone in this mouldy church; things are better as they are."

It took him but a few minutes to raise the slab beneath which lay the chalice. And having possessed himself of it, he wasted no time in replacing wood

or stone, but left both where he had laid them down, with the pick and crowbar at their side. The thing to do, now that he had secured the treasure, was to get away from the church and its neighbourhood with all possible speed. But with his usual caution Hood paused for a moment to consider all the possibilities of the situation. His ruminations ended in his going back to the chapel and making fast the door which the sexton had left open; then he repossessed himself of the key which he had placed in old Torketyl's keeping, and letting himself out of the chancel with it, locked the door, drew the key from the lock, and set off round the west end of the church. Climbing over the churchyard wall into the valley he went down to the river and dropped the keys of the chancel and tower into a hole in the bank. That done, he made his way across after the fashion of the previous evening and climbing the opposite hillside, set off along the lane towards the wayside inn where he had left his horse. It was the middle of the night when he came underneath its windows, and when he had rattled on one and another of them with a switch which he tore out of the adjacent hedgerow and had succeeded in arousing those within, the nightcapped landlord gave him no very courteous reception. He was not going to open his door to any man at that hour, and he bade Hood go and sleep in the nearest ditch.

"Who talks of sleeping? I want my horse. Throw down the key of your stable door, and when I have

taken my beast out, I will leave key and pay on this window-sill."

"A likely tale! I have a horse of my own, to say naught of a pony and an ass in that stable. Come in the morning."

"Very good. Then as you won't come down, I shall break open your stable door, take my horse, and go away without paying you. I am on the King's business."

The host grumbled.

"Why could you not say that before? I will come down."

And presently he came, still grumbling, into the yard, swinging a lanthorn.

"The stabling is eighteenpence," he said as he brought Hood's beast out upon the cobblestones. "And I ought to have another sixpence for being roused out of my sleep."

"All you ought to have is ninepence, and plenty," said Hood. "But there is a shilling. You should know that Government men are not to be cheated. Look there!" And he drew out of his pocket certain papers printed in big type, one of which was a copy of the bill offering the reward for Alan and was accordingly headed with the Royal Arms, and flourished them before the man's face, feeling sure that he could not read. "You know the Lion and Unicorn when you see it, I think. And hark ye, master innkeeper, if any hereabouts, or coming along the road, should make enquiry of you about anybody

who would seem to be myself, you have seen naught of me, d'ye hear?"

"I shall say naught. But a shilling is poor money."

"Keep your tongue in your head, and you shall have another shilling when I am back this way to-morrow night. Maybe I shall have to knock you up again."

And without further ceremony he mounted his horse, having already bestowed his precious burden in the great saddle-bag which hung from the crupper, and rode away into the darkness in the direction of Bridlington. Far off across the headlands he heard the surf beating on the rocks and surging into the caves of Flamborough; landward the night lay heavy over the rise and fall of the Wolds, and was wrapped in a silence broken now and then by the harsh cry of some night-bird startled by the horse's footfalls. Once he drew rein and brought the horse to a standstill, listening if aught was coming towards him or following behind him. But he heard nothing save the wash of the North Sea and the sharp cry of the curlew.

Hood was revolving many things in his mind as he rode along. He now knew that Alan was in the Throxenbys' care—well, then, it ought not to be a difficult matter to track him to whatever new place of refuge they took him to. Somewhere he would have to go, and wherever he went, he, Hood, would be after him. It was easy to imagine what would go on when Ulf and Alan found themselves prisoners, and, on their release, discovered that the chalice had

disappeared. They would realise at once that they had been watched—it might be that they would suspect him there and then of having been the spy. But in any case they would arrange to remove Alan from the toft, knowing that he was no longer safe. Wherefore, he, Hood, must despatch the business he was on and get back to Cransthorpe, where more caution would have to be exercised than before.

"Not that there is any great need to tarry long at the Quay," he muttered to himself. "An hour will see my errand despatched. But this prize of mine—I cannot carry it about with me. And if I am to bestow it anywhere it must be while the night holds."

Riding slowly along the highway he kept his eyes open for a coppice or covert, and at last coming to one which seemed to be far enough removed from any habitation, he dismounted, tied his horse to a bush, and taking the precious parcel from his saddle-bag, made his way within the trees, and after some groping about hid it beneath the thick undergrowth of a bramble-brake. He knew that it would be far safer there than if he had taken more elaborate precautions in respect of it. No one was likely to go hunting for treasure or for anything else in a place like that, and it would be an easy matter to ride there and take it up again whenever he pleased to do so. He marked the covert carefully by a close observation of its contour against the sky, and noted that a great beech towered high in its midst as he rode away again into the night.

It was grey morning when Hood came up to the old Priory in Bridlington town, and in the streets around it there was no sign of life. Nor was there man or lad to be seen when he rode down to the Quay, just in time to see the sun rise through a veil of misty cloud which mingled with the sombre grey of the wide sea whose slowly-heaving waves lazily lapped the curving wall of the harbour. At the end of the wall he drew rein and gazed at a certain house whose tall, timbered gables rose high above the masts and spars of the vessels lying at the wharf beneath it.

"Tubal Grice used to boast that he was always up with the sun," he mused. "It will do no harm to knock on his door."

And he dismounted, and drawing the horse after him went across the cobbles at the head of the harbour, thereby raising a clatter which echoed loudly from the surrounding walls. Ere he had crossed the empty space a window in the high-gabled house was thrown up, and a man thrust out his head and hailed him. The head was of a more than unusual size, and thickly covered with a thatch of light red hair; the rising sun shone fiercely on it, and on the gleaming teeth which showed themselves as the man opened a large mouth in a cavernous grin, and Hood, looking up at head and teeth and grin, and at the thick bull-neck beneath, was involuntarily reminded of ogres looking out of the casements of enchanted castles.

"And what," demanded the man, in a soft and

melodious voice which contrasted strangely with his ferocious appearance, "what brings Master Hood to the Quay at this hour of the morning?"

Hood threw him a swift glance.

"Business," he answered.

The man grinned again.

"Profitable business?" he asked.

"I should not be here else," retorted Hood. "Come down."

"I will come." And he disappeared from the window and in a few moments reappeared at the side door. "Bring you beast in here," he said. "I was just rising when I heard you clatter on to the cobbles."

Hood led the horse into a yard littered with odds and ends of sea-craft, spars, cordage, canvas, blocks, all betokening the craft of the sailmaker, and fastened the bridle to a ring in the wall.

"I am hungry," he said. "I should like to breakfast with you, Tubal."

The red-haired man grinned again; it seemed his way to open his lips and show his great teeth as a preface to any observation.

"That is an easy matter, friend Hood. An easier matter, I doubt not, than it will be to get your business out of you."

"I can tell my business in less time than you can set your meat and drink out," said Hood.

"That is something new. It must be a plain matter. Come in, then," and he led the way to the house and into a room which looked out on the har-

bour, where the incoming tide was beginning to wash the keels of the boats and cobbles that had been left high on the mud banks. "Which first? Food or talk?"

"We can talk while we eat. I suppose there are none to hear us?"

"Nobody. All my folk are abed and will be for another hour. As for me I am always up to catch the early worm. And here you are!"

"I said I was hungry," remarked Hood, and seated himself at the table. "Set out what you have and you shall hear my tale."

He knew that he had his tale all ready, for he had thought out his future plans with care after stealing away from the toft. There was going to be no beating about the bush in this case; to begin with, Tubal Grice was not the man to stand it; to end with, the discovery of the gold chalice had made it unnecessary. He would have to sacrifice a considerable share of the reward offered for the young Earl, but he would more than compensate himself by the sale of the cup, which he reckoned to be well worth two thousand pounds. That was to be his own perquisite; he was not minded to mention his possession of it to any man until he showed it to a probable purchaser. And so the story which he had to put before Tubal was a short one.

The sailmaker rattled knives, forks, and earthenware platter on the deal table at which Hood had taken his seat, and from a pantry that opened out of the room brought a mighty chine of cold beef, a

basket of oatcake, a loaf of bread, and a tall jug of ale. In silence he filled Hood's pewter measure and his own, and heaped two plates with beef; each man began to eat and drink with appetite.

"Well?" said Tubal, watching his guest out of the corners of his eyes. "And what is it this time?"

Hood pulled out the bill on which the terms of the reward for the apprehension of Alan were set forth beneath the Royal Arms.

"This. You will see mention of a thousand pounds there—printed in bolder letters than the rest. That is the main thing."

The sailmaker glanced the paper over, staring at it from above his lifted fork.

"I have seen that before. There is a copy posted at the head of the harbour there. There is another on the old gateway at the Priory. You might have seen both as you came in."

"There was no need to heed either if I had, seeing that I had this in my pocket. I know where this lad is."

"You do! 'Tis a wonder then that you have not fastened to him as a limpet fastens to aught that it touches."

Hood made a wry face and growled. "So I should if I had received the assistance that I depended upon. That is why I come to you. Listen!"

And he told the story of his adventures with Alan and in search of him since the time he had seen little Gamel pulled out of the Ure. The sailmaker ate and listened in silence, nodding his head as the

various points were made plain to him. But he heard naught of St. Peter's cup.

"Well?" said he, when Hood had made an end. "And what next? What do you come to me for?"

"Help and advice. You have no objection to picking up some of this gold?"

"None! But Master Hood has some notion in his head. Out with it, man! I love plain speech."

"Well, you have a vessel of your own—by this time you may have two, for aught I know."

The sailmaker raised his knife, and pointed through the window to a ship that lay in the mud-banks across the harbour.

"For that matter I have three. Two of them are venturing in the Baltic. There is the other. I am thinking of sending it to Bordeaux for wine. But what then?"

"I thought—well, I thought that if you would join me in this, and we could take this lad unawares and get him safely on board your vessel, we could get headquarters, do you see, and deliver him up to the folk who after all will have the first paying out of the money. Once under hatches, and out at sea, there would be small chance of rescue for him. 'Twixt your harbour here and the Tower itself is a road on which no ambush can be laid! And—'tis a question of a thousand pounds."

"Of which you would, of course, be prepared to take but half!" said the sailmaker, looking out of his eye-corners.

"I thought one-third would satisfy you," grumbled Hood. " 'Twas I who found him."

"Who brings the game down gets more than he who sets it up! You confess that you have not succeeded in taking this young sprig. Now, if I go in with you, I shall have to raise a posse of trusty and lusty lads, good Master Hood, and they will not be raised for naught. Besides, I am to find the vessel."

"You said you were thinking of sending her to Bordeaux. The Thames is on the way."

"Aye, but I did not say when. This will have to be a special voyage, for every day that the young lord is free increases his chances of liberty. The Government will not always be thirsting for Jacobite blood. If we are to handle the blood-money we must hurry him up to the butchers as speedily as we can. And, as I say, I shall have to find lads to take him, for you cannot. Half-a-dozen stout lads I can command off our quay-sides here, and as I also said, they will want paying. So will my crew. And there will be rations to find. Master Hood, by all the rules and rights, I ought to have two-thirds!"

"That is being of a grasping turn. You would never have heard of the matter but for me. And this is the second good chance I have given you of earning a little money with small risk."

"Small risk! Well, perhaps there is little in this if the lad is unarmed, and does not break somebody's head, but as to the other, it was only by God's blessing, or the devil's, that that revenue cutter did

not sink the only vessel I then had. However, dog does not eat dog, and we will agree to share. Five hundred each. But you will have to put your name to a paper."

"Of course. We are partners. Now, how shall we take this young cockerel?"

Tubal, who had eaten a prodigious amount of beef and bread at a rapid rate, pushed his plate away and rising produced a spirit case from a niche in the wall. He fetched water and glasses, and put tobacco and pipes on the table.

"The beef and the ale are somewhat cold on a man's stomach, summer though it be," he said. "Take a dram of spirits to correct your breakfast. There is brandy, and there is the right Nantz. And neither paid duty to George or Charles or to anybody else. Fill your glass—and if you care for it, smoke a pipe."

And he filled his own glass and lighted a pipe, and for a while puffed in contemplation.

"How shall we take him?" he said at last. "The more important question is—where shall we find him? Swend Throxenby is too clever an old fox to keep him in that church tower. They will have him off and away. And they will not try the ports. Swend will know that since this reward is out every quayside will be watched."

"Where will they put him then?"

"Inland. Close, very like, to where he was last seen. When folk go hunting for a man they rarely dream of looking for him next door to his own

house. There are the Wolds. I would engage to hide myself for a year and a day between Leavening Brow and Beverley town without discovery, even if a hundred troopers sought me!"

"Aye, but you know the country."

"So do the Throxenbys—nobody better. They will bestow him in some of the Wold valleys. Now I come to think of it, Swend's brother-in-law farms land the other side of Great Driffield. They might send him there. Bear in mind that on the Wolds you can keep a look out for strangers such as can't be kept elsewhere, that I know of, and that in those valleys a man might, as I say, trick a hundred other men for a year. That is probably where they will advise this young fellow to go."

"I shall track him," said Hood.

Tubal blew out a great cloud of tobacco smoke and took a pull at his spirits. He shook his head and showed his teeth.

"I doubt it. It is no use your going back there, friend Hood. Lie in a hedge-bottom as you did yesterday you might, and if the game remained stationary, do some good you might, but as soon as the game is started you would do no good, for you would be known. You will do better to hide yourself until we have safely laid hands on our man."

Hood stared.

"Who is to find out where our man is?" he demanded.

"That is what I am coming to. I know of a person—not a man, but a woman—who will play spy

much more successfully than you could. Wait till our victuals are settled and we will go see her—she will do all we want and do it well, and you can bide here and watch me and my lads make sails. I doubt not it will be the most innocent employment you have had these many years! Fill your glass again."

An hour later Tubal Grice led Hood into a maze of narrow ginnels which lay in the shadow of the ancient Priory. Though the sun was now well risen above the bay there were few people stirring, and in the alleys through which they threaded they met none but a fisher-lad or two, slouching off to the harbour. At the door of a one-storied cottage, white-walled and covered with old thatch, the sailmaker paused and knocked. He turned to his companion and spoke in a low voice.

"The woman who lives here," he whispered, "is called Mumping Sal. She spends her time wandering about the Wolds, and if she cannot do our work nobody living can. Do you remain outside while I tell her what I want, and——"

Hood started back as the door opened. A woman, tall, scraggy, garmented in what looked more like a Franciscan monk's habit than female attire, whose face, browned with weather, seamed and scarred from blows or cuts, was further disfigured by a black patch drawn tightly over the right eye, glared out upon them from the cavernous gloom of the cottage. She had been chopping wood and held a hatchet in one skinny hand as if she meant to brain

any intruder upon her privacy. But Tubal Grice laughed, and went in, and shut the door, and Hood waited and fell to appraising and reappraising St. Peter's chalice.

At the end of half-an-hour the sailmaker came out. He led the way back through the narrow ginnels.

"Now we have something trusty at work," said he. "As for you, Master Hood, you can twiddle your thumbs and watch us at our innocent labours —until news comes."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SURPRISE AND THE FLIGHT

ALTHOUGH he was in utter ignorance of the fact, Hood was not the only person who was out and about when he slipped away from the old church with St. Peter's chalice under his arm. If he had taken the trouble to look very carefully in that direction he might have seen the figure of a man outlined against the sky and the stars above the centre arch of the little bridge which carried the road into the village. Had he seen it he would have noticed that while he himself crossed the stream and hurried away up the hillside, the figure remained as motionless as if it were a stone statue instead of a living man. But Hood was only concerned about getting away with his prize. He saw nothing. The man on the bridge, however, saw him.

This man was Hartas Dring, Swend Throxenby's first ploughman—the man who had kept watch with Olaf the previous night. Hartas came from Wold Newton, and on the day which saw Alan placed in St. Breloc's Cell he had taken a holiday to his native village in order to attend the wedding of his sister. There had been festivities, and Hartas, a privileged

servant, had stayed to participate in them. It was past midnight when he came down the hill to Cransthorpe. Pausing on the bridge to cool his head in the night wind which blew sharply down the valley from the sea, he heard a man running towards the bank of the stream. In another moment he saw him. Hartas, bold as a lion in full daylight—especially if he had company—was not so bold at midnight and alone. He opened his mouth as wide as his eyes, stood immovable—and trembling a little—in the very centre of the bridge, and watched this night-stroller cross the river and vanish up the hillside. Then he woke out of his momentary stupor, scratched his head, hurried off to the toft, and after drinking a pot of ale in the pantry, where a barrel was kept to which he had graciously been allowed access for that occasion lest he should come home hungry and thirsty, decided to rouse Thorkill and tell him what he had seen.

Thorkill, when he had gained the full use of his senses, made Hartas tell his story all over again. Then he pulled out his great silver watch from under his pillow and consulted the big black figures on the dial.

"A quarter to one. Who could be about at this time? And why cross the stream there when there is a bridge on one hand and our stepping-stones on the other? Why did you not jump over the bridge and lay hold on him before he could get away?"

"I—I thought it might be a ghost!"

Thorkill put one leg out of bed, hesitated, and on

second thoughts let the other follow it. He began to dress himself.

"A ghost! Better that than an armed man. However, midnight is a time to try any man's spirit. Don't make any noise, Hartas, but go down again and wait for me. I am going up to the church, and you can go with me."

The churchyard was as quiet and silent as the summer night when Thorkill and Hartas climbed over the wall and approached the tower; there was no sound in all the valley but the gentle murmur of the little river in its pebble-strewn bed. Thorkill paused beneath the great buttresses and listened.

"Whether there is anybody about or not, and whether this is a wise thing to do or not, I cannot tell," he muttered. "All the same, I must have speech with Olaf, who is doubtless as sound asleep as a dormouse in winter. Find some small stones, Hartas, and let us see if we can fling them in at the window there."

Olaf slept on through the first shower of pebbles, but Alan woke, and when he had realised that this was some design for attracting their attention, crept across the floor, and roused him out of his slumbers. Olaf became awake on the instant.

"What is it?" he asked, seizing Alan's wrist. "Is it you, Alan?"

"It is I, and there is someone throwing stones through the window. There is another."

Olaf jumped to his feet.

"That must be Thorkill. Now how am I to look

out and escape a stone in my eye or my teeth? However, he will know my whistle." And putting his fingers in his mouth he blew a shrill blast. Alan uttered an exclamation which expressed doubt of the wisdom of this proceeding.

"Was that wise? It may not be Thorkill."

"Who else can it be? There!" said Olaf, as another whistle sounded from outside. "Thorkill, right enough. Give me a leg up to the casement. What brings Thorkill out of his bed at this hour? Something has happened?"

Leaning out of the window, Olaf looked down in the darkness, and saw the two men beneath.

"Is that you, Thorkill?" he asked in a low voice. "What is it?"

"I and Hartas Dring. Come down. I want to speak to you."

"Go to the chancel door." And Olaf drew in his head and dropped back into the chamber. "Stay there," he said to Alan, and hurried down the stair. But in another moment Alan heard him utter a loud groan, and the next he came running back. "Here is a pretty coil!" he panted. "The door is locked!"

"Locked! What, upon us?"

"Upon us. Anyhow, the key is not on our side. Fool that I was not to have made sure of it!"

"But—who can have locked it?"

"We have been watched, lad! We have been tricked—betrayed—spied upon. I will lay aught to nothing that this is some devilry of that fellow Hood's. Help me up into the casement again."

And with Alan's assistance he scrambled up to the window again and whistled for Thorkill.

"Olaf!" said Alan.

"Well?"

"The chalice!"

Olaf uttered something that sounded very like a malediction on somebody.

"Aye, to be sure! Very like, the man who locked us in saw us busied in the chancel. In that case——"

"He will have carried the chalice off!"

"I fear so. But here is Thorkill."

Thorkill come hurrying around the buttresses of the porch.

"Why have you not come down?" he demanded.

"For the best of reasons. We are locked in."

"Locked in?"

"Locked in—with the key, if it is there, on the other side of the door."

"That explains it, then," said Thorkill, in meditative tones.

"Explains what?" asked Olaf.

"Hartas here, crossing the bridge on his way home from Wold to Newton half-an-hour or more ago, saw a man make over the churchyard wall, cross the river, and go up the hillside."

"Plague take him, why did he not lay hands on him, then? That is the fellow! And in addition to fastening us up here in this tower, he has doubtless robbed us and the church."

"What was there to rob?"

"Never mind. That will keep. Thorkill, we must

get ou' of this tower. Also we must get into the church. Send Hartas Dring for a cart rope and a crowbar. Hurry, Hartas, ghosts or no ghosts."

Hartas made speed in the direction of the toft, and Olaf, still clinging to the masonry of the window, looked down at his brother.

"Thorkill!"

"Well?"

"I said—robbed. To-night—last night—we found somewhat buried in the chancel which would have made you stare. And we left it where we found it so that you could all see it as it had been laid there a long time ago. And now I expect to find that it is gone."

"But how did anybody get into the church?" asked Thorkill.

"There must be a broken window somewhere. It is useless to worry our heads about that now. Somebody did get in—must have been in when we were busy in the chancel. Else we should never have been locked in. We have been outwitted."

Hartas presently came back with the rope. Thorkill fashioned a coil of it and flung it up to Olaf, who caught it and dropped back into the chamber. Then he paused in the act of drawing it in.

"Now what is best to be done?" he said, musingly. "To leave you in here, or to let you down? There may be men in ambush in or about the churchyard or the lane between here and our house."

"If there are any about who have the key," replied Alan, "they can get at me in here."

"That's true. And there are four of us—all stout fellows. Down you go, first, then. Here, help me to make the rope fast to this old chest. And get a tight grip on it with arms and legs as you slide down, or you will have the skin off your two hands. Up and out!"

Alan found himself at Thorkill's side a moment later. And presently Olaf came down the rope with the lanthorn and the flint and steel rattling at his waist.

"What now?" said Thorkill.

"Come round to the door of the little chapel," answered Olaf. "That is the easiest place to break open. Give me that crowbar, Hartas."

And he hurried them round to the narrow door by which Hood had gained an entrance on the previous evening, and had taken care to fasten when he went away.

"Light the lanthorn, one of you," said Olaf. "Now, then—this door was rotten enough when I last looked at it, and ought to open easy enough," and he drove the point of the crowbar in between the wood and the masonry. "There it is!" he added, as the mouldering timbers started out of the rusty hinges. "Now show a light to the chancel, Thorkill."

Before they had fairly reached it they saw that the hiding-place of St. Peter's cup had been rifled. There lay the slab of stone, the wooden covering, the grave-digger's pick. And Alan remembered with bitter reflections that it was on his suggestion that

they had put the chalice back instead of retaining possession of it.

Olaf snatched the lanthorn out of Thorkill's hand and ran to the door of the chancel and thence to the tower. He came back growling.

"Both keys gone! Now I see it all. This fellow—it must have been Hood!—has got into the church somehow after it fell dusk last night and has watched us. It was he who fastened us up, and he has carried the keys off with him."

"Then he may be about—and others with him," said Thorkill.

But Olaf shook his head.

"No! Not with so much gold and jewels in his possession. I know Hood. He would not give up a bird in the hand for fifty in the bush. He would know the value of that cup as well as any man. And he would have his horse tied up somewhere, and by this time he will be off as fast as he can go. I think the coast is clear of Parson Hood. All the same, he may set the troopers to work again. Let us go down to the house and see my father."

When they came to the toft there were lights in the little parlour. Freda, always sharp of ear, had heard Hartas Dring talking with Thorkill, and rising from her bed had seen the two men leave the house and go out by the big gate. Then she had feared evil for Alan and Olaf and had aroused her father.

Swend listened in silence to all that they had to tell him; in silence he took the old book of the

Gospels, which Alan had been careful to bring away from the tower, and stared at the rough drawing made by his ancestors two centuries before. And after he had heard all, he sat for some time, thinking while the rest waited, knowing that he was considering what had been done and what was best to do.

"This is how it is," he said at last. "This is Hood's work. It is all of a piece with what one knows of the man. What!—did he not have his gown pulled over his head for malpractices with money in his own parish at York?—only the rogue managed to keep himself within the law. When the soldiers went away yesterday morning, Hood stayed behind—to spy. Somehow, in spite of all your precautions, he found out that Alan there was in the church—somehow, into the church he got. You may be sure that when you dug up this cup Hood was at your elbows!"

Olaf groaned.

"Why did I not search every corner of the old place? But I never dreamed that any one could be in it."

"You might have searched every corner, lad, and still not found him. Vermin like that have a trick of making themselves invisible when need comes. However, if I know aught, we are free of Hood."

"Free? Why, father?"

"Because the man is so greedy and avaricious of nature that he will say to himself: 'Here is what will turn into good money as soon as I can find them

that will buy it!' and he will speed off to sell that cup. He is safe of that—if he can get away. But he is not safe of the blood money he was after."

"You think he will not return?"

"He will not return. For his wits will tell him that we are sure to suspect him. Now, lads, listen to me. We will take our turn at attack. It may be that Hood has gone off to Scarborough; it may be that he has gone to York. We will act accordingly. Thorkill, do you set off to Scarborough, and see if you can come across news of him there. Olaf, set you out for York. See the authorities—tell them of your discovery of the cup (it must come into the hands of the Minster folk in any event, if it be recovered), and take steps to have Hood arrested when and if he reaches his house. Accuse him boldly to them—let him clear himself if he can. You too, Thorkill, noise it about in Scarborough of what we have been robbed. No need to conceal it, nor to bring Alan's name into it. We have had a great golden chalice stolen from our church, and we have good reason for suspecting Hood to be the thief. That is sufficient for him. Now, lads, fill your bellies, saddle your horses, and be off."

Olaf hesitated.

"But what about Alan?"

Swend nodded his head.

"I am thinking of that. Well, listen, then. I have no fear that Hood will come this way again. Nevertheless, he may give word at Scarborough that he has seen Alan here, and the authorities there may

think it their duty or worth their while to send back those troopers. If so, they will come to-day. And therefore, Alan shall go across to Michael's and lie there for a while until we know that all is clear, or how things are going. Michael will see that he comes to no harm."

"But he cannot find his way alone," said Olaf. "He knows naught of this country."

"I said naught of his going alone. Freda there shall ride with him. I would go myself but it will be better for me to stay here in case those troopers come back. Freda shall explain all to Michael. Now get ready to be off, all of you."

Alan lingered. He looked from one to the other of the men, and last at Swend.

"But, good sir!" he said. "This is asking too much of you all. I cannot for ever trouble you with my affairs and distresses. I have brought annoyance here—why should I visit more on your brother-in-law? And this is getting me no further on my journey. Far better let me go off alone and try to find some ship at Hull or elsewhere."

But there arose a general murmur of dissent, and Swend laid his hand on Alan's arm as he rose from his chair.

"Be advised by me," he said, with a knowing glance at Olaf and Thorkill, who knew that he was thinking of what Fiddling Dick had said in that very parlour. "You do not know what a few weeks may bring about. Besides, we are your debtors, and can-

not let you come to harm. You will be safe enow at Michael's until you can come back here, and maybe you will be safe for always then. For the time being, go with Freda."

Alan had no objection to that. To ride with Freda across the hills and through the valleys in the early summer morning!—that was infinitely preferable to being mewed up in a mouldy church. He looked out of his eye-corners at Freda; Freda avoided his glance; she was already making preparations in accordance with Swend's orders. And it was not until they were away from the toft and clear of the village and on the edge of the Wolds in the first grey of the morning that they exchanged speech with each other. Alan felt himself moving as in a dream; this was a pleasure he had never anticipated; he had an instinctive dread of its coming to an end quickly.

"How far have we to ride?" he asked of Freda, breaking the silence in which there was some constraint.

"How far?" she answered. "Perhaps fifteen—perhaps twenty miles. I cannot say to a mile. But we shall soon be there."

"I do not care if it takes us all day. After all, what delightful changes there are in life! If anybody had told me last night that I should be riding with you across these hills this morning—free!—I should have looked upon it as an idle prophecy which could certainly never come to pass."

"But—you are not free."

"Free of St. Breloc and his musty old chamber at any rate! And if we are pursued I think our horses are good enough to give any pursuers a fair run for their money."

"Only to be taken in the end. I shall not be at ease until I hand you over to Uncle Michael. You will be safe with him—safer than with us."

"It will be good of him to take such a miserable outcast in. And that reminds me—what did your father mean, Mistress Freda, when he said that I did not know what a few weeks might bring about? I have been thinking of that ever since he said it."

Freda knew very well what Swend had had in mind, but she also knew that she was not to reveal confidences. She put Alan off with an evasive answer.

"Oh, he meant that—that in a few weeks things may be different. There may, for instance, be no need to—to leave England."

Alan looked around him at the undulating Wolds whose ridges came one after another into view to the westward as the sun rose over the coast line behind them.

"I wish I could think so!" he said. "I wish—not that I regret the past, for I don't—I wish that I could do what I spoke of in your garden—settle down here in these valleys and lead a quiet life. It is, I am sure, what I was meant for. I hate the rush and whirl of the world as I have seen it. I want no more of cities or camps or men. If the old Hanoverian would only leave me in peace, and I could

scrape up money out of the wreck I left behind me at home I would take that farm you told me of and be like Abraham, keeping my flocks and herds."

"But you would still be my Lord Stirthes, and of Stirthes Castle. Don't forget that!"

"Stirthes Castle is a roofless ruin, and as for the title, I was never meant for such things, and should not have been a lord if my poor brother had not met his death as he did. I told you that I was always for a quiet life."

"And very dull you would find it in our Wold valleys! There is naught to do but the daily tasks from one year's end to another. You will see how quiet, how dull, how uneventful it is when you get to Uncle Michael's and have spent a time with him. If you took a farmstead in these parts and settled down in it—why, you would come to the toft some day, and tell us that you had grown weary of the quiet fireside you wished for and must be away to gayer scenes!"

"Not while you were near me!" Alan said, but said it to himself. It was on the tip of his tongue to say it aloud and to say it fervently, and if he had he would have said more, for he had fallen desperately into love, and it was hard to keep silence. But he said naught. During his hours of loneliness in the old church he had thought deeply. He was a refugee; he was proscribed; there was blood money offered for him; his fortunes were ruined. It would not be fair, honourable, right, to tell the girl what he felt; he was bound in honour to her, and her father, and

her brothers. So he kept the bridle tight upon his tongue, and the more he remained silent the more he dreamed of the life he longed to live with Freda amongst the solitudes across which they rode in the freshness of the summer morning.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WOLDS

THE country into which Freda Throxenby carried the refugee that June morning was in those days one of the most sparsely populated and lonely regions in England. There was no town in all its length and breadth; the towns which lay on its boundaries were even smaller than they are to-day, and to-day they would pass for little more than villages in other regions. Such villages as it possessed were mere hamlets—a church, and a farmstead or two, a few cottages set wide apart on the hillsides or hidden in narrow valleys. One main road ran through it from east to west; what other roads were there, were little more than tracks through the scarcely-broken solitude. There was then no enclosure of field or meadow; agriculture was confined to the breeding of sheep and of a few cattle; cornlands there were next to none. Once, long before history began, the rise and fall of the land had been covered by dense, impenetrable woods; succeeding generations had cleared the woods away, until at last there was no more treeless region between Tweed and Thames. But in the middle of the eighteenth century no coppices or coverts crowned the

gentle undulations, no hedgerows divided farm from farm. The whole stretch of country was a green desert, in which only a few handfuls of people dwelt in isolated spots; there were infinitely more folk sleeping in mounds and barrows on the surface and in the walled-in graves beneath it than lived in the light of day and the sharp winds that swept over hill and through valley from the North Sea.

For the high ground of the Wolds was once thickly populated by a race which existed long before the Romans first looked with amazement and speculation on the white cliffs of Kent. This region is, indeed, the oldest part of Yorkshire. It is a region of a distinct and peculiar formation and character, in more respects than one. It begins at that point on the northern bank of the Humber where the Romans, having crossed from Lincolnshire, through which they had cut the great road called Ermine Street, began that other road which runs through Market Weighton and Pocklington to York, passing on its way to ancient Goodmanham, in the dark recesses of whose temple the Druids celebrated their heathen rites. Gradually rising from the banks of the Humber at Brough the land attains an elevation of eight hundred feet at Wilton Beacon to the north of Pocklington; here and at Leavening Brow, still farther north it is at its highest; at Leavening its direction turns to the eastward and sweeps round overhanging the south bank of the River Derwent until the great crescent-shaped ridge reaches the North Sea at the massive

cliffs of Speeton and Flamborough. It forms an uninterrupted chain of low hills from the sea to the estuary but with one notable break. From Settington on the west to Bridlington on the east runs the great Wold Valley, wherein are formed those remarkable streams which the local folk call gypsies —streams which break out of the surface in the chalk valleys at intermittent periods. Nowhere else in England is this phenomenon seen, that a small but active river should suddenly introduce itself to notice where no stream was before, should flow joyously through the valleys and ravines for a period of two or three months and should then disappear as mysteriously as it came. Nor are these gypsies seen but in very wet seasons, and the reason why they are seen at all is that the soil of the Wolds is of such a nature that it readily and greedily absorbs whatever rain falls, and letting it pass underground allows it to burst out again from beneath the chalky surface at far distant points. But one of the wold gypsies, at any rate, is of a permanent character, and flowing beneath Wold Newton and by North Burton and Rudston eventually runs into the sea near Bridlington.

To follow the line of the Wolds from the Humber to the North Sea, traversing the highest uplands, is to enjoy the charm and delight of wide-spreading prospects. From the heights which rise above the road that the Romans cut from the very edge of the Humber, one may look westward to the great church of Howden, eastward to the won-

drous minster of Beverley, and see between these ancient landmarks many a thorpe and toft and wooded park enclosing manor and mansion. Farther north, from the summit of Leavening Brow, one may look north and west and south, and by a turn of the head see the purple expanse of the Yorkshire Moors beyond the valley of the Derwent, the hills of Craven and the Western Dales in the far distance, York and its Minster lying in the midst of the great plain which stretches from Ouse to Tees, and the low hills of Lincolnshire rising above the broad shining waters of the Humber. From these heights the wanderer looks down on the Wold towns —on Pocklington, where St. Paulinus exercised his missionary vocation; on Market Weighton, the Delgovita of the Roman occupation; on Driffield, where a Northumbrian king, Alfred, lies buried. And in almost every village seen at the foot of the low hills there are evidences of antiquity in the old churches of Norman and Saxon architecture, and at Aldrow there is the mound around which pagan warriors gathered and at Goodmanham the site of the famous pagan people, whereof, according to Bede, Coifi was High Priest.

But it is on the heights of the Wolds that the closest links with antiquity are found. On these uplands, and especially along their northern fringe, from which one looks over the valley of the Derwent, the evidences of the prehistoric age are plentiful and prominent. The mound, the barrow, the camp-dwelling of the semi-barbarous forerunners of

Saxon and Norseman and Dane are seen on all hands. One can reconstruct the life of these people who lived on the high ground between the far-spreading Vale of York, then an impenetrable wilderness, and the grey sea which they no doubt believed to be a highway to the world's end. Here they lived in their stone-circled huts; into the valleys beneath them they ventured, greatly daring, to hunt the deer and the boar; such flocks as they had they led to water at the streamlets and rivulets which ran into the Derwent; here they fashioned their weapons of flint, their ornaments of bone, their simple vessels of clay. And here in the tumuli which men of a later generation have opened with care they were laid to rest, with their spears, their drinking cups, their little ornaments of glass and jet. Where they had lived, between the far-off western mountains towards which they never ventured, and the wide, restless sea on which they sailed no rude craft, there they died, and were laid and left in peace for thousands of years. Now there are many sheep and cattle around their graves, and good corn-land where in their time there was no more than coarse grass and heather.

On the frieze of the wall at Sledmere there is set forth the fact that in the short space of thirty years Christopher Sykes, by assiduity and perseverance in building, planting, and enclosing, set such an example to other owners of land that what was once a bleak and barren tract of country became one of the most productive and best cultivated districts in

the county of York. This Christopher was the father of that great and much-beloved Yorkshireman, Sir Tatton Sykes, of whom the country folk of his parts, and indeed all folk all over the Three Ridings, still talk with pride and affection, as the model of a country gentleman and a sportsman and a Christian man, who loved the open air and breakfasted on apple-pie and new milk, saw the St. Leger run for at Doncaster on more than sixty successive occasions, rode all the way from Sledmere to Epsom to see the Derby, and though the railways had come long before his death, never got up behind a steam-engine when he could use his own legs or bestride a horse. Christopher Sykes did for the Wolds what Richard of Rulos in his day did for the Cambridge Fens—where there was naught there began to be much, and above the graves of the old Druid-led, half-savage folk of these solitary ridges the corn-lands change every summer from the fresh green of June to the red gold of August.

But there was little of grain or root to be seen about the lonely farmstead which Alan found when he came to the little valley of Givendale and was duly handed over to Michael Burton. The farmers of that time were concerned with little more than sheep-breeding, and the sheep wandered over the uplands at will, unchecked by fence or ditch, pretty much as the sheep wander at this day on the fell sides of Cumberland and the hills of North Wales. A man knew his sheep as he knew his household goods, and they were not always earmarked. Here,

indeed, was the pastoral life, and all men were shepherds. And if Throxenby's Toft had seemed to lie well out of the beaten track, then this small homestead in a valley hidden deep in the hills was as if it were in another world; it seemed so far away from all else that the wonderful thing would be if any murmur or even loud shouting of far-off voices had ever reached it.

The man who greeted Alan, heard what Freda had to tell him from Swend, and from that time gave the lad a simple and a ready hospitality and friendship, as was typical of the country in which he lived as its own green hills and narrow dales. He was strong and silent and resourceful, a man about whom the upland breezes had always blown, who seemed to live as a part of the things which grew from the fusion of sky and earth, of wind and rain, of sun and starlight. A grey bachelor, with no knowledge of the world beyond what he gained at market, or from the occasional visits of his nephews and his niece, he was full to the brim of wise country lore and wisdom, and as he and Alan sat by a lonely hearth at nights, or walked over the windswept Wolds by day, he told his guest of things that are not to be found in the books. And Alan began to understand how a man can live in lonely places and yet never be alone.

Olaf came galloping across country when Alan had been at Michael Burton's a week or more. He poured out his news as soon as he had leapt from his horse. It was not much, but what there was of it

was reassuring, so far as Alan's safety was concerned. There had been no further visits to the toft on the part of constables or red-coats. As for Hood he had vanished. Nobody had heard of him in York nor yet in Scarborough. Most likely he had fled with his booty to London and they would never hear of him or St. Peter's chalice again.

"But enough of him," continued Olaf. "There is better stuff than that to hear. Thorkill saw Fiddling Dick in Scarborough and through him brought you a message from Lord Carlisle."

Alan looked at him in silence. He was still in no mood to hear counsel about submitting himself to the usurper.

"Naught but a few words," said Olaf. "This—you are on no account to leave the country."

Alan frowned.

"What may that mean? I am not going to do penance in a white sheet, Olaf!"

"I know naught about white sheets. But if I were you I should do what my lord says. And so we all think—my father, and Thorkill and I."

"But I cannot for ever be beholden to your hospitality!" exclaimed Alan, half-irritably. "I am already in your debt to such an extent that——"

"That is all so much nonsense! It is we who are in your debt. Besides—how do you know what Lord Carlisle is after on your behalf?"

"I know nothing. What should he be after?"

Olaf rubbed his head.

"Nay, I know nothing, either. But this. I do know

—if I were a great lord, as he is—and, for sure, he is the greatest man hereabouts, and the richest man —and I had a kinsman that was like—well, like to lose his head because of a bit of honest fighting, I would beard the King in his own house and tell him that I would never more drink ale or stick knife in meat until my kinsman were made as free as myself! Eh?"

"That you would! And what's more, you would keep your word. But Lord Carlisle told me I must go on my knees and entreat mercy from the Hanoverian. And I am as like to do that, Olaf, as these same Wolds of yours are to grow fifty-foot oaks in as many hours."

"Well—for that, do what my lord says. For aught you know, you may hear all of a sudden that the folk there in London are inclined to let bygones be bygones, and you may find yourself going back to Scotland as fine a lord as the earl himself—as of course you are and we all know it—and with your pockets full of money again. After all, nobody ever knows from which quarter the wind is going to blow from one day to another."

Alan laughed and looked at the great giant with admiration.

"That is what Olaf Throxenby would like to see! And belike he would wish to see me in my ancestral hall, in robes and coronet, with twelve score vassals and serfs around my nobleness's feet?"

"Naught better, lad!"

"Well, then Olaf, listen! I have thought much

since I came into these parts, and I wish I were a free man and had some money, for I would lay aside robes and coronets and vassals and all else—things which I shall never have and care not for—and I would get me some land and some sheep, and I would start farming here as plain Mr. This or That, for I see vast possibilities on these Wolds. And I would thank God for the chance of a quiet and an industrious life. Haven't I told you I was never meant to be what my brother's death made me? I want now to be a sheep-farmer."

Olaf stared long at him. At last he drew a long breath.

"Well, and I don't know that I wouldn't rather see you that than t'other!" said he. "And so—follow my lord's counsel and bide where you are."

CHAPTER XVIII

TUBAL GRICE TAKES COMMAND

A WEEK after Hood rode down to the Quay and made his offer to Tubal Grice a certain sloop came rolling and tumbling round Flamborough Head and put into the little harbour that lay beneath the sailmaker's windows. And after it had made fast to the wharves its master went ashore and sought Tubal out, wanting a set of new sails for his vessel. It was then the middle of the afternoon, and Tubal following his usual custom had gone to the Admiral's Head to take a glass. Thither the new-comer repaired, found the sailmaker, stated his business, and settled down for a spell of conviviality, to which Tubal was nothing loth. And after the fashion of the days in which newspapers were scarce they began to tell each other such news as they had lately gathered.

"This last week or so," said the master of the sloop, "I have been in Scarborough. And there I heard of the friend of yours that was concerned in that little venture in which I helped you, three years ago, when we beached a certain cargo in Cayton Bay."

The sailmaker picked up his ears.

"Hood?"

"Aye, that's the man's name. For the moment I had forgotten it. Hood, to be sure."

"What of him?"

"There are folk in Scarborough—and elsewhere—that would be glad to set eyes and lay hands on him. He has robbed a church, which is an unlucky thing to do."

"Robbed a church? What church? And of what did he rob it?"

"Well, this is what I heard in Scarborough, at the Three Mariners. Is there not, somewhere inland, a place called Cransthorpe?"

"There is, some six or seven miles away."

"It seems that in that church there was a great gold vessel—cup, chalice, I know not how they call it—that belonged to York Minster, in the days of the old religion, and was so massy and great and, moreover, set with precious stones, that it must be worth a vast deal of good money. They say your friend Hood has stolen it."

"They say. Who say?"

"Nay, it is common talk there in Scarborough. There was a great fellow came into the town while I was there—a giant in size—that was said to be the parson's son of that place, and he was as keen about finding this Hood as a lawyer is after money."

"That would be either Olaf or Thorkill Throxenby. Giants they are, both of them. But about Hood?"

"Olaf or Thorkill, I know not which. However, this tall lad had a straight tale to tell the folk in authority. It seems that this Hood was at Cransthorpe on a certain day and is believed to have hung about there until night, when he broke into the church and stole the gold vessel. There was a certain fellow—a ploughman or such like—saw a man hurry away from the churchyard at midnight—that, they say, was Hood. Anyway, the gold vessel was gone next morning. And now the hue and cry is out for your friend. That cup, 'tis said, is worth every penny of a thousand pounds, and maybe more. It is, of course, a hanging matter. You have heard naught of it, then?"

"Not until now," answered Tubal, who was thinking deeply.

"I thought that as Hood is a friend of yours, and has been in these parts, you might have seen him. However, you may see him swinging at the crossroads later on."

"Not likely. Hood is a sharp man. Well—I must go back to my business."

And he left the Admiral's Head, and walked rather more swiftly than was his wont at that time of day to his house, and into the chamber which had been given up to Hood, who, during the period of waiting for news from Mumping Sal, thought it best to keep indoors until darkness fell over town and bay. Tubal found him reading a book which he had found, with others, in a cupboard, and looking none the better for his confinement. He glanced at

the sailmaker eagerly, as if in hopes of news that would release him.

"You have heard something?" he exclaimed, casting the book aside.

"I have heard a good deal," he said. "It strikes me, Master Hood, that your neck is like to be in a noose—if it is not already in one that only needs a little tightening."

Hood stared at him. As yet, no thought that Grice could have heard of his sacrilegious robbery entered his thoughts.

"Noose! What do you mean? What talk is this of nooses? I thought you brought some word of that old one-eyed beldam whose wit you boast so much of."

"I bring word of something that is of more importance to you than any news from the old beldam, as you call her. It is well you have a safe hiding-place here."

"If you will speak plainly I shall know what you are talking about. At present I don't."

"All right, then, my lad! Where is that gold cup which you stole from Cransthorpe Church?"

Hood received this blow full on the face, and showed no sign of feeling it. He had acquired the art of controlling his features, and he neither moved eyebrow nor let an eyelash quiver; he looked at the sailmaker as if he were astonished.

"I know naught of any gold cups and Cransthorpe Church! What are you talking of?"

"This." And Tubal told him all that he had

heard from the master of the sloop. "And good evidence, of the sort that lawyers call presumptive, is that!" he concluded. "There you were, on your own admission to me, and by night you left there, as I can testify. What do you say to that, my lad?"

"That other folk were as likely to break into the church as I myself. I haven't got their cup—if there ever was a cup."

The sailmaker regarded his guest steadily; Hood stared back.

"I know you for a deep and crafty one, Hood," said Tubal at last. "And I'll lay a pound to a penny that you know more about this than you'll admit. Now, supposing you have that cup?"

He paused and looked Hood narrowly between the eyes. Hood remained silent and motionless, watching him. Tubal smiled.

"Of course, if you have—well, you ought to share with me! Hadn't you better out with it?"

Hood's eyes suddenly gleamed. He snarled out his answer.

"So that's what you're after?" he said. "I tell you I haven't got any cup! If they take me for stealing it—well, they'll have to prove that I stole it. Let them try. About the place I was, 'tis true, but for what purpose? To point out, to find out, the whereabouts of a traitor. That's legitimate work, isn't it? But as to stealing—well, as I said before, let them prove me a thief."

"Whether they prove it or don't prove it has nothing to do with whether you have it or not. Peter-

son said that he heard it said in Scarborough that it was worth every penny of a thousand pounds. Now, if you really have it——"

He paused, and again looked hard at Hood, who remained silent.

"If you really have it, and it is solid gold, and set with jewels—well, I know a certain goldsmith in Antwerp who would give a proper price for it. And I know another in Rotterdam—and now I come to think of it, another in Hamburg. A proper price, I say, Hood. Not a quarter—nor a beggarly tenth of the value. Eh?"

"What do I care about your goldsmiths in Antwerp or Hamburg or Rotterdam! I tell you I have not got that cup."

"Maybe not here. But you may know where it is. There is, as I said before, strong presumptive evidence against you. You had far better confide in me —and go shares with me. Come now!"

But Hood only growled, and the sailmaker smiled and rose from his seat.

"All right, Master Hood. However, you can't very well slip me, though you may with my assistance slip the constables. I sha'n't let you out of my sight. Think it over."

And he went off, leaving his guest to growl and grumble, and to wonder whatever had induced the folk at Throxenby's Toft to noise abroad the news of their loss. It seemed strange that they should do that, for Hood could not see otherwise than the publicity would draw attention to Cransthorpe and

so to Alan. And he began to wonder all manner of things, and to make many conjectures, and after fretting over his enforced idleness, and cursing himself for ever approaching Tubal Grice, he sought the sailmaker in his own regions downstairs, where, in a small apartment, he kept such books of account as seemed necessary, and transacted affairs out of earshot. And at sight of Hood, Tubal produced a bottle and glasses, for he was sure that his guest was come to bargain.

"When is that old witch going to bring news?" demanded Hood, accepting hospitality without demur, but with no thanks. "This is a whole week that she has been gone, and we have heard naught."

"There is a wide stretch of country from Wilton Beacon to Flamborough Head, and from St. Austin's Stone to the Wold Valley, Master Hood. Give the old woman time. Besides, as things are, it matters naught to you whether Mumping Sal comes back in a week or a month."

Hood swallowed a mouthful of liquor, and glared at its giver over the rim of the glass.

"Oh!" he growled, surlily. "And why, pray?"

"Because you are like a fox that has gone to earth in a hole from which there is only one way out. It is a mighty serious matter to rob a church."

"So you must needs harp on that?"

"Well, if you're innocent or not, dare you let your face be shown in York or Scarborough? Answer me that!"

"There are plenty of innocent folk laid by the

heels, friend Tubal. If all the constables in England, and all the red-coats at the back of them, laid hands on me they could not prove that I had stolen this cup, nor could they find it. That is, I mean, they could not find it on or about me."

"Oh, I know well enough what you mean. You mean that nobody actually saw you steal it, and that you have hidden it somewhere, intending to take it up at your leisure and pleasure. Of course! But all the same, you can't do anything without me."

"And how is that, pray?"

"Because you are in my power. Hark ye, Master Hood, do you think I am a fool? I know my way to a good thing as well as any man. Now this matter of the young Jacobite lord is a toss-up, a venture, a speculation. There are all sorts of things between me and my share of the reward. We have to find out where he is. Then we have to take him. Then we have to get him away from here, and all the way to London. He might kill one of us; he might escape; he might be shipwrecked. And possibly, before even we could hand him over to them, the Government might have pardoned him. You shake your head. Aye, but why not? You tell me the Earl of Carlisle is his blood-kinsman, and his lordship is a man of vast influence, and what is more, he has a long purse. There is a great deal stands between me and realising aught out of arresting young Jacobite rebels, good Master Hood. 'Tis, I say, naught but a venture."

"Well, and what then?" demanded Hood impatiently.

"What then? Why, that such a solid and material matter as a gold cup, set with precious stones, seems to me to be much more likely to produce ready money than t'other thing, that's all. Do you understand me?"

"I understand that you think I have the cup."

"I believe that you have hidden it somewhere and can put your hands on it whenever you wish. That you stole it I believed from the very moment I heard of the matter. Here, let me fill your glass, and be you a wise man to listen to me."

And he helped Hood to more liquor, and drew his own chair nearer, and began to talk to his guest and prisoner more earnestly, while Hood sulked and growled, well knowing that the sailmaker's arguments were doubly strong because they were backed by force.

"Listen to me, I say!" repeated Grice. "Be a wise man, and realise matters as they are. Since the Throxenbys have made this noise you can't go home and you can't go anywhere without fear of arrest. It won't matter whether the cup is found or not. There is good enough evidence to connect you with the theft, and as sure as they get you, they will hang you. Now, if you will go shares with me, we will carry both affairs to a proper end. We will have the lad, and we will sell the cup. We will carry the young rebel to London, and if we get our

money we will cross to Antwerp, where, as I say, I know a man who will give us a proper price. Come! Share with me, and you shall be as safe as I myself, and I have a great respect for my own neck, I can assure you. What do you say?"

Hood gnawed his finger-ends and regarded his host with lowering brows. He made no immediate reply, and Grice, after watching him for a time, laughed.

"But then, you can't help yourself!" he exclaimed, rubbing his knees with some signs of glee. "Come, now, out with it! Where is the cup?"

Hood knew that he was cornered. But his natural inclination led him to stipulate and to bargain.

"You do your share first," he growled. "Let that old witch find the lad, and do you take him and get him on board ship, and then, perhaps——"

Tubal slapped his knees again.

"We'll leave the last word alone," said he. "You'll produce the cup as soon as we have the young lord in our hands?"

"Well—yes, then," answered Hood, grudgingly enough.

"A bargain's a bargain. Mind—I shall take good care that you keep your side of this one. Mind you don't show as much as your nose-end at the windows. You'll have to wait in patience until Mumping Sal comes with news."

"If the old hag ever does come!"

"She will come—if the lad is anywhere on the Wolds. Wait, I say, with what patience you can."

However, both had to wait for nearly a month longer, during which Hood fretted and chafed at the enforced idleness, and Grice pursued his usual avocations with equanimity. And at the end of that time, Mumping Sal, more weather-worn than ever, and looking as if she had slept much under hedgerows and on the lee side of hayricks, came to the sailmaker's, and saw the two men in Grice's private parlour. Grice, who knew his agent's peculiarities, filled her a glass of Nantz out of a certain square and dusky bottle, and left her to tell her tale at her leisure. Mumping Sal let the liquor warm her heart before she deigned to open her withered lips. But at last she cocked her one eye at the sailmaker with a knowing leer. She held out a skinny hand that was more like the claw of some antediluvian bird than anything appertaining to a human being. Tubal nodded comprehendingly and rattled money in the pocket of his breeches.

"The tale first, the pay second. Out with your news, mother!"

Mumping Sal edged her chair nearer to the table at which the men sat.

"I have found the lad you want," she said, in a voice that seemed as if it had grown thin and dry in her throat. "A week ago I found him."

"Well? And where?"

"He is at Michael Burton's, in Givendale. A long lad, with black hair and black eyes, and a look in them like what you see in a hawk's eyes. They call him Mr. Alan there. I saw him and Michael Bur-

ton going about amongst the sheep, and they seemed mighty well pleased with each other."

Grice nodded thoughtfully.

"And Michael is a long lad, too," he said. "This may not be so easy a matter, friend Hood. Michael Burton would not care the value of a hedgesparrow about shooting anybody who interfered with him or with anybody about him."

The woman bent forward and tapped Tubal on his wrist.

"Burton is not always with him. I know where the lad can be found alone—at least, with no more than a child with him."

"Aye—and where?" asked Grice.

"Do you know the high end of the dale, just beneath Wilton Beacon? There is a bridle-path there that goes out of the dale to Fridaythorpe village. Well, there he is building a sheepfold, and has with him naught but one of Burton's lads—a child. Every day he goes there, of an afternoon. And market-day in Malton is Saturday."

Grice drew money out of his pocket.

"That one eye of yours keeps a good look out, mother! There's your money. Now keep your tongue as quiet as your eye is keen. Off you go. Stay, though. Here is another matter. Do you know where Flamborough Dick can be found?"

"I can find him."

"Send him here, to-night. See to him at once," commanded Grice, and saw her away. "There, what did I tell you?" he said, returning to Hood. "Didn't

I say the old woman would run the lad to earth? The time is coming, master, when you will have to dig up that cup."

"We have not taken our man yet," retorted Hood.

"No, but we shall take him on Saturday. Now let us settle our plans. Five of us will be enough—more than enough. Well, here am I, and there are you, and Flamborough Dick, who is a dare-devil, will make three. And I have two sea-going fellows that can ride horses. What is more, I can command good horses. You did well when you came to me."

Hood was not so ready to agree on that point. It seemed to him that he was making Grice a present of a good deal for doing very little. And he regarded the sailmaker in a moody silence.

"Because, you see, Master Parson, you could have done nothing without me," continued Grice. "Now what we will do is this. I will see to everything. I shall furnish these lads with horses—and with something else, in case matters grow serious. We will all set out by different ways, and we will meet at a certain point without Fridaythorpe village, and then move together down the valley when one of us has made sure that our game is there. Then we will hurry him here, and if the wind is favourable we will have him aboard ship and be off. If not, I can so bestow him in this house that he will be as safe as if he were in York Castle. As I said—leave it all to me. What you have to do then is to dig up that cup. And when you do that—and I am very sure it

is somewhere at hand—I shall go with you. I am always one to stand by a friend—especially when he is such a one as yourself."

Then Grice went off to perfect his schemes, and Hood set his wits to work on the problem which had chiefly interested him since the sailmaker had found out his secret. He meant to have St. Peter's chalice for himself, and it should go hard if he did not cheat Tubal Grice at the last moment.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DEATH OF FREDA'S HORSE

OLAF THROXENBY went homeward across the Wolds after his visit to Alan, thinking more deeply than was his wont. Having a generous disposition and a ready sympathy he had taken a liking to the lad whom fortune had thrown in his path so unexpectedly, and naught would have pleased him better than to see Alan's present desires gratified. Knowing nothing of courts or camps, and little of the world beyond what he saw of it at market or fair, it seemed to Olaf that no man need desire a finer thing in life than to be master of so many acres and of herds and flocks; it was all he desired for himself and was accordingly a matter that should satisfy any reasonable being. As Alan had remarked more than once, there was naught to go back to there in Scotland; why, then, Olaf asked of himself, should he not be allowed to carve out a new life here in what was to him a new land? Better be a Wold farmer with quiet comfort in safe hold than a landless lord without means of keeping up a lord's dignity. And so much Olaf said to his father that night, when, the rest of the family having left them, the two sat up by the fire in the stone hall, smoking their pipes.

Swend heard all his son had to say and considered matters. To him there seemed nothing to be wondered at in Alan's desire to begin a new career. For Swend was a wise man, and though the news of the outside world filtered through to Cransthorpe in but thin driblets, he was quick to digest and to appraise it when it came.

"There is one matter that is certain, my lad," said Swend. "Rather, there are two matters, one dovetailed into the other. There is naught for the young man to go back to. We have heard all he had to tell us about his broken fortunes. His family, like many another, has given its all in money and endeavour and blood to the cause it believed in. And the cause is lost."

Olaf, who knew little and cared much less about politics, nodded in silence.

"Lost," continued Swend. "I shall not live to prove the truth of what I am saying, but if I lived a hundred years longer, Olaf, my lad, I should be astonished to hear of any further attempt to put a Stuart back on the throne. From such bits of tidings as we get, we know what has happened. The last we heard of him Charles Edward was either still wandering like a beggar man in the Highlands or he had escaped to France or gone back to Italy. He will never come again. And as for them that supported him, where are they? Where are all the Macgregors, and the Macdonalds, and the Stewarts, and the Mackinnons and the rest of them that swaggered boldly enough as far south as Derby,

boasting of what they were going to do in London, and at Derby turned and went sulking home? The bones of some of them are at Falkirk, or at Stirling, or at Inverness, lad, and of most of them at Culloden. Where are their leaders? Some of them are the shorter by their heads; those who are not are homeless wanderers, as Charles himself is, or was, the last news we heard of him. No—there is naught for a Jacobite lad to go home again for."

"All the more reason why Alan should stay here," said Olaf. "He can start again."

"A man can't start anything, lad, unless he has his head and his freedom spared to him! The King's pardon must come first before there is talk of aught else."

"Well, but does not this message of Lord Carlisle show that his lordship is doing something to get it?" asked Olaf. "What else could he mean? And he is a great lord and a powerful, by all accounts."

"That's true enough. I have my own ideas that his lordship is busied with the affairs in London. They say there are men high in favour and in power who are not averse to persuasion when it takes the colour of gold. Mayhap he will produce his kinsman a pardon. In that case, if the lad wants to start out on a new road—why, he saved our Gamel's life, and readily enough, you all tell me, and we must do what we can to help him. But it may be that if he were once pardoned and free, to go where he liked, his notions might change, and he might look farther afield."

Olaf shook his head and smiled.

"I think not, Father. And for a good reason. I am not without eyes, and though I know more of sheep than of sentiment, I think I can see aught that is before my nose. And I would lay a score of our Wensleydales to a hand-fed lamb that Alan is in love—and with our Freda."

Swend showed neither surprise nor astonishment, nor did he look upset or angry. He nodded over the stem of his long pipe.

"You think so? Has he said aught—to you, I mean? To her, I am sure he would not say aught as things are. He has an honest face and a true man's eyes."

"That he would not!" exclaimed Olaf. "I mean, I am sure he would say naught to her until he felt free to do it. Nor has he said a word to me. But I can see—as I say. And what wonder is there?"

"There is naught to wonder at in anything that is of the complexion of love, my lad," said Swend. "Well—well—'tis a youngster that I took a liking to from the first, and I would he were delivered from what hangs over him!"

Olaf shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"What good would it do the King to have Alan's head taken off?" he exclaimed. "He is naught but a boy."

"Charles is little more," replied Swend, "but there is thirty thousand pounds offered for him. There is naught but waiting for it, Olaf, my lad. It would pain me sorely if Alan were taken now and

suffered aught grievous, for if it is with him as you say, then, I fear it may be the same with Freda, for love is a matter of high infection. However, 'tis all beyond my control or yours. Only, I shall be glad to hear good news, and I confess that message stirred some up in me."

Thus things went at the farmstead, until, one day, as Swend, Freda and Gamel sat at dinner together, Olaf and Thorkill having gone to York to attend a great sheep-fair, there came running into the little parlour one of the lasses, with news that a man had ridden into the toft and was asking for the master. Father and daughter glanced at each other; each saw that the other had been quick to connect this visit with Alan, and Swend, by the sudden flushing of the girl's cheeks and the leaping of light in her eyes, realised that his daughter was in love with the landless young lord; almost as plainly as if she had put the thing into words she was asking if this was some message of or from him. She half-rose from the table, but Swend motioned her to sit down and went out himself. And in the hall he met Fiddling Dick, and by one glance at his face learned that he brought no bad news. The fiddler, indeed, beamed with satisfaction as he shook Swend's hand and nodded cheerfully at Freda and Gamel, who were watching him anxiously from behind their father's great bulk. And as he strode into the parlour he threw a comprehensive glance around it.

"Not here?" he remarked.

Swend motioned him to a seat, and Freda laid knife and fork for him.

"You mean the young lord?" said Swend. "No —he is still where I sent him—at my brother-in-law's place across the land. You have news?"

"That I have," replied the fiddler, and sat down and drank to everybody's health in the ale which his host poured out for him. "And it is not bad news, and I hope it may be of the best news, and I wish he were here to get it. And somebody, Master Throxenby, must carry it to him at once, for I must be off back to Scarborough within the hour."

"We will see that it is carried to him," said Swend, helping his guest from the great round of beef that stood before him. "What is it that he must hear?"

"This. Lord Carlisle has been in London this three weeks past, on what business we may guess at, but his family he left behind him there at Scarborough. And this very morning one of his folks came to me with a message. If I could find the young man I was aware of I was to tell him that his lordship would himself be in Scarborough within the next few days and would wish to see him on business of the first importance. Wherefor—and here is the significance of the message, Master Throxenby, or so it seems to me—I was to tell the young man that if he had it in contemplation to take a journey, either abroad or at home, his lordship most earnestly desired that he would put any such adventure off until he had seen him, for he had certain things

to communicate to him which were of greater matter than any journeys. And if that does not mean that there is good news for the lad then I know not what a plain hint means."

"Nor I," exclaimed Swend. "And my lord is not a man to raise false hopes. The lad should hear of this at once, and so he shall."

"I thought that one of your sons would carry the message on if I did not find Mr. Alan here," suggested Fiddling Dick.

"They are both at York, at the sheep-fair, and will not be back till to-morrow or late to-night," said Swend. "But I have a daughter who is as good as any son in the matter of riding across country. Freda, my lass, put on your riding things. Gamel, go you and tell Hartas to saddle your sister's horse."

"Will you remember the message, Mistress Freda?" asked the fiddler, glancing at the girl as she rose to obey her father's order. "Or shall I repeat it again, word for word?"

"I heard all of it," answered Freda. "I shall not forget. Besides," she continued, pausing at the door and looking at her father, "I suppose I am to bring Mr. Alan back with me?"

"Sharp lass!" exclaimed Swend. "So she must, fiddler, eh? After a message like that, the lad will be safe here, what?"

"Safe enough! Bring him back here and let him bide until his lordship comes. An hour's notice will fetch him into Scarborough. I wish I had your errand, young mistress. All the same, I doubt not

Mr. Alan would rather hear good news from your lips than mine. And good news it is. I drink his health and better fortune—and you can tell him so from me."

As she rode away up the narrow lane which led from the village to the high ground above, Freda wondered if the news could be all that her father and Fiddling Dick seemed to consider it to be. Did it mean that a new turn of fortune's wheel had given back to Alan his freedom, that he would no longer be forced to hide, and to be dependent on others for a roof-tree? Did it mean that he was at liberty to resume his rightful position amongst men—or would there be some reservation, some condition which he would be too proud to accept? In the short time of their acquaintance Freda had realised much of Alan's character and disposition; his recent adventures and privations were too near, the sense of his losses still too keen, the feeling of the righteousness of his cause still too deep to permit of his swallowing his pride and bending knee and neck to the conqueror. She felt that if any conditions which he felt to be degrading were attached to his pardon he would spurn them indignantly even if the axe and the block were presented as an alternative. She had talked with him on that matter, and had recognised an obstinacy which folk of more practical mind would have called stupid and ill-considered; Freda knew that, however stupid it might be to do so, Alan would abide by the course of holding no parley with his enemies. He had told her during their

ride to Givendale that his future course was determined. He would never forswear himself; he would make no submission. If the Government chose to let bygones be bygones and give him a pardon—at the mere thought of which he turned up his nose, indicating his proud-stomached scorn of folk who gave what they had no right to give—well and good, he would live the quiet life they desired and never trouble them more. But he was not going to do a penance with his body which he did not feel in spirit; rather than do that they were welcome to his head and they might stick it on a pike and show it at the Port-Bow in Edinburgh, or on Temple Bar in London, or on Micklegate at York, or wherever they liked, and as soon as they liked. All this he had said, and Freda had felt that he meant it. And perhaps his stern, if gloomy, determination had attracted her. It showed at any rate that he could live up to an ideal, and though the girl would have been hard set to explain why it pleased her to see this in him she knew that the pleasure was there.

But suppose that Lord Carlisle had by his great influence procured for his young kinsman a full and unconditional pardon, and that Alan was free as the wind which was beginning to whistle around her as she put her horse to the gallop across the wide stretching uplands? Would he still cherish that notion of settling down in that out-of-the-world corner of the country, and living the pastoral life of which he had spoken so desirously, as he sat with her in the sunlit garden on the afternoon which followed

his arrival at her father's homestead? Or was that expression of the wish to lead a quiet life between the hills and the sea, merely the outcome of a natural desire for rest after the time of stress and privation he had gone through? Once free, would he not become restless, once again wish to go out into a wider world, amongst men of action, the world wherein more things were done and said in a day than at Cransthorpe in a year? Freda was old enough and sensible enough to know that a young man may indulge in one set of dreams one day and in another set on another day, and she was not sure that Alan, his own man again, would feel towards life as Alan, the hunted fugitive, had felt. With liberty might come wider visions.

"Perhaps he will go away from us again just as suddenly as he came," thought Freda, reflecting on the meeting at the Barnaby Fair, and on all that had happened since. And being apt to philosophise a little when she was alone she remembered that however a captive bird seems to become resigned to and even happy in its cage while the door remains closely shut, it never stays in it nor returns to it when the door has once been opened. However, it was something very good to be able to carry the fiddler's news to Alan, and Freda urged her horse across the Wolds at his best speed. He was a young and valuable horse, bred by Swend on his own farm, and he had given him to the girl on her last birthday, to be kept for her own special use. He would have carried her or even one of her great

brothers round to Givendale by the road running through Great Driffield in well under an hour and a half, but Freda was anxious to save the half-hour, and instead of striking into the highway which runs from Bridlington to Driffield and so to Pocklington and York, she made straight across country over the unenclosed Wolds, following the track which she always used when riding to Michael Burton's—a track which led in a direct line over the uplands above Kilham, and past the Danes' Graves and Wetwang until she came out along the line of the ancient entrenchments which run from Wetwang across the hillside east of Wilton Beacon. From the high ground beneath the Beacon she could look direct into Givendale and on Michael Burton's farmstead. And at the head of the dale she expected to find Alan, whom she knew, from what Olaf had told her, to be using his energies and his time in building a sheep-fold for his host out of the loose stone which lay about the hillside.

Alan had arrived at the stage in which a man wants something of physical labour to occupy himself withal. He had tramped up hill and down vale with Michael until he knew all the nooks and corners of that lonely district. At that time of the year there was little or naught to do on a sheep-farm The sheep were spread out on the Wolds; down at the homestead in the valley the days went by in idleness. A chance word dropped by Michael gave his guest the notion of building a sheepfold at a certain spot on the hillside, above the little streamlet

which ran down from the high ground beneath Wilton Beacon; Michael laughed when Alan mooted the idea and bade him please himself as he liked. He lent him one of his farm lads for helper, and Alan began to toil early and late, and to enjoy his labour with great appetite. There is that in all men which impels them to build, even if it be only castles in sand during childhood; the planning of a sheepfold, the selecting of the stones and placing them in position, gave Alan a fine amusement which was deepened by the knowledge that his work would prove of much use and convenience. Olaf and Thorkill, in their periodic visits to the dale, stopped awhile by the slowly-rising walls and humorously offered the builder more work when that was done; secretly they admired Alan for the honest labour he put into his task, for the sweat that rolled off his brow, and for his unsparing use of his muscle and sinew. There, at any rate, said they, was one who was not afraid of steady, grafting toil, and they sang his praises to their father and sister.

It was two o'clock of the afternoon when Freda drew rein at the last rise of the hill which lay between her and the valley. She let the panting horse recover his wind, and then walked him slowly up the crest, expecting as she reached the brow of the ridge to see Alan and his lad at work on the sheepfold half a mile below her. And when she came to the top the sheepfold was the first object that met her gaze; the second was a group of horsemen galloping across the hillside from the sheepfold in the

direction of the high road which lay far down in the valley. As Freda gazed, this group swept round the corner of a long escarpment and disappeared from view. Then she saw that there were no figures at work amongst the stones which had been gathered into heaps in readiness for building the rough walls, and her first thought was that Alan was not at work that day. But a second glance showed her something which made her urge the horse down the hillside at a speed which she would not have ridden him at under any other circumstances. Near the sheepfold, a motionless figure on the close-cropped grass, lay the lad who had been helping Alan, and he remained so quiet as Freda raced down, careless of the rough surface over which she dashed, that she expected to find him dead. And before she could dismount, it had flashed upon her mind she had arrived in time to see Alan carried off.

The farm lad lay stretched on his back, with a rapidly-swelling bruise showing red and purple half across his forehead. There was a hillside stream close by and Freda fetched water and dashed it in his face, and at last brought him round to consciousness. But at first there was no getting aught out of him but babble of men and Alan and incoherent cries.

"What is it? What has happened?" she asked him when he eventually became calmer, and began to whimper. "Who struck you? Who were those men that I saw riding away?"

The thought of his assailants sharpened the lad's

wandering wits. Bit by bit she got his story out of him. He and Mr. Alan had been at work when some mounted men suddenly rode from behind the coppice close by and surrounded them. They were armed—they had both swords and pistols. They seized Mr. Alan before he could do anything more than knock one of them down, and they forced him upon a spare horse that they had. He himself had tried to run down to the farm; then one of them had struck him across the forehead with a great stick. And after that he remembered no more.

Freda bade him set off for the farm at once, and to tell his tale to Michael if he was there; if not, as soon as he returned. Then she mounted her horse and galloped away across the hillside in the direction which Alan's captors had taken. As she had bent over the farm lad, coaxing him back to the use of his wits, her own wits had been hard at work. This, she was sure, was some work of Hood's—whose ever work it was, she must know where Alan was being carried off to. She knew that the high road at the foot of the long slopes which led down from the elevated site of the sheepfold ran to York one way, to Driffield another. That stretch of it which went toward York she had in view all the time; upon it the group of horsemen did not appear. They had gone eastward, then, towards Driffield. But Freda knew that at Driffield they might take either of two directions: they might go northeast to Bridlington Quay or due south through Beverley to Hull. Her instinct told her that they

would make for one of the two ports—whichever it was, she meant to follow. And as she raced down and across the hillside she felt a fierce joy in her heart that she was riding a half-thoroughbred horse, that in spite of its sixteen miles' journey in the hot noontide was still fresh and capable of running down any ordinary beast.

If Alan had seen Freda gallop down the hill his heart would have leapt into his throat and his brain reeled at the sight of her daring. Over smooth ground the pace at which she urged her horse forward would have been startling and dangerous, and the ground was neither smooth nor without its surprises. There were depressions here and ridges there, and a ravine suddenly appeared where it was not expected, and a gully yawned at the horse's feet before she had time to ride around it. But Freda had no thought of riding round anything. She had been used to horses of all sorts from the time she could walk and talk, and she knew nothing of nerves. And the good beast beneath her being as sure-footed as a goat, she and it came down the long shining slopes like a whirlwind and clattered on to the high road with a prodigious clashing of iron hoofs on flint and pebble exactly as the troop of horsemen trotted up a gentle rise a mile ahead of her. She saw one of them turn in his saddle and look back. Then the troop rode over the crest of the rise, and disappeared again.

Freda patted the good horse's neck and galloped steadily onward. On the other side of the rise the

road narrowed, making a sudden turn into a thick growth of wood which overshadowed it on either side. And at the narrowest part of the road and where the twist was sharpest, two men rode out from the unfenced bushes, one on either side, and turning their horses' head to head made an effectual barrier. As she rode up to them, Freda recognised in one the hatchet-faced, long-nosed man whom she had seen at Boroughbridge when Alan leapt into the Ure after Gamel. Hood, of course, she said to herself!—so she had been right in her surmise as to the identity of Alan's captor. The other man, a stoutly-built, red-haired man with sly eyes looking out of a round face, she did not know.

There was naught for it but to pull up or to ride boldly at the men. If she could have forced a way between them, Freda would gladly have sent either or both rolling in the dust, but she saw determination in their faces, and she was forced to pull her smoking horse on to his haunches. Then the men heard Freda's tongue, and saw the flash of her eyes.

"Let me pass!" she commanded. "How dare you stop me!"

The red-haired man smiled.

"Softly, mistress! This is no question of daring. Where are you bound in such a hurry?"

"What is that to you? Let go my bridle."

For the red-haired man had dismounted and laid hold of Freda's horse by his head-stall. And he was fumbling for something that was concealed from her by the skirt of his riding-coat.

"Softly, I say, mistress. We have no wish that you should go further. We want this road to ourselves. Look there!"

He pointed suddenly along the way by which Freda had come, and she, taken off her guard for the moment, turned in her saddle and looked back expecting to see others riding down the road. A sudden sharp and loud report made her turn to her assailant as quickly as she had turned from him; beneath her she felt the horse quiver, shake, and begin to stagger. Then she suddenly comprehended, and her face, hot and flushed with her exertions and her indignation, grew white. And as she hastened to spring from his back the poor beast shivered, dropped in a senseless heap and rolled over on the grass of the wayside. Grice, as Freda had looked away, had shot him through the head.

The murderer was already climbing into his own saddle. Hood had moved off a little. The girl looked at both in speechless anger, clenching her fists. The red-haired man laughed.

"You can follow as best you can now, mistress," said he. "But if you are wise you will not follow at all. I have more bullets than one in my pistol. Be warned—and warn any of your folk who may be following you."

Then the two men rode off, and Freda was left standing by her dead horse. It was no consolation to her that the poor brute's death had been sharp and painless; the ruthless cruelty of the man who had shot him down in cold blood had set a thou-

sand pulses of indignation beating and throbbing within her so fiercely that she would have stood by unmoved and have seen both men torn to pieces with red-hot pincers. But she wasted no time or sentiment; there would be plenty of time to cry her eyes out over the loss of her father's gift when she had done what she must do. And with no more than a farewell glance at what but a few minutes before had been so full of life and energy, the girl whipped off her riding-skirt, laid it tenderly over the dead horse's head and shoulders, and set out with determined step and tightly-compressed lips along the road. There was but one thing of consequence just then—she must know where Alan was being taken.

Once clear of the woods which overhung the highway at that part Freda looked around and summed up her situation. It was useless to go back to Givendale, for Michael Burton had but one horse fit for riding, and she knew that he would have it with him at Malton market. She was a good ten miles across the Wolds from her own home; between her and Driffield there was naught but one small hamlet, Kirkburn, and she was not likely to get help there. There was nothing for it but to make her way to Driffield—and Driffield was at least five miles farther along the road. There were folk there whom she knew and who would help her—Matthew Lowton, the innkeeper, and his family. She would get a horse there, and she would get help, and she would find out which road the troop of horsemen had taken—that to Bridlington, or that to Hull. So she

marched forward along the white highway, thick with the dust of the chalk from the hillsides, with the fierce July sun beating down on her and rage and desire of vengeance strong in her heart. If only she had had Olaf and Thorkill with her when the two men stopped her in the wood! And if they would so calmly kill a poor beast they were not likely to show much mercy to Alan if he got the chance of making a fight against them. Freda was not conversant with what was done in the case of proscribed and attainted outlaws. She knew that a thousand pounds was offered for Alan—mayhap it meant for Alan, dead or alive. It might be that the men only wanted to get him in some quiet place and there cut off his head, to show to the King's officers—she seemed to have heard her father and brothers talk of such things. The thought of these horrors drove her more swiftly towards Driffield.

And into Driffield at last she hurried, covered with dust, almost worn out, and woke Matthew Lowten out of his afternoon sleep, and when she had startled him into complete wakefulness, poured out her story to him and begged his assistance. Two things wanted—the means of sending a message to her father; a horse, and if possible, horsemen to accompany her in search of Alan's captors.

Matthew Lowten rubbed his head in amazement. It was beginning to be a rare, an uncommon thing to hear of such matters as this. True, there were some knights of the road left, but they were few, and that district had small attraction for them.

"A red-haired, paunchy fellow!" exclaimed Matthew. "Now, if that is not Tubal Grice, the sail-maker, of Bridlington Quay. At any rate, 'tis the very description of him, Freda, my lass. And the other man?"

"The other man I know. He is Hood, that was once a clergyman at York, and was turned out of his living. He it is who is wanted for stealing an old communion cup out of our church."

"That I have heard of. Ho-ho! This sounds like a serious business. Sit you down, and let the women see to you, my lass, and when you have refreshed yourself, write your message for your father, and I will have a lad away over the hill with it on a pony. And as for the rest I have stout lads and good horses, and we will find you a mount and you sha'n't go unaccompanied, I'll warrant you."

"But which way will they have gone?"

"That we can quickly find out. But if that was Grice, then they'll have made for the Quay. Now do as I tell you."

And the innkeeper bustled out, and called his women, and went out into his stable-yard and made a great to-do. And within half-an-hour, Freda, accommodated with a horse and another riding-skirt, was off through Driffield street, with old Lowten and half-a-score ready cavaliers at her heels, all joining zestfully and gleefully in the man-hunt.

CHAPTER XX

THE SAIL LOFT

HOOD and Grice rode away from Freda and the dead horse with as much haste as they would have shown if Olaf and Thorkill and a score of stout country lads had thundered down the road behind them. And once clear of the trees both looked anxiously around—but not in expectation of attack or of being overtaken. Their eyes sought the sky, sweeping it in every quarter. There was not a cloud in it; there was naught, indeed, in the whole wide dome of steely blue but a sun that blazed upon them as if it was minded to scorch them for their misdeeds. And there was not a breath of air anywhere about the land.

"Curse it!" exclaimed Grice. "From the look of things last night I made sure of a north wind this afternoon! However, we may find it coming before nightfall. And, anyway, we have our own little business to transact before we can sail, friend Hood. Let us get the youngster safely on board and then we will after that cup."

Hood frowned and glanced back along the road.

"How do we know those two long-legged Throxenbys are not somewhere about?" he said.

"Not they. That has been some assignation, tryst, meeting, that the lass was after. It was by chance that she saw us. And now that we have reckoned with her, we are safe enough. Only, we will keep our young gentleman out of other folks' sight as much as we can. You have your paper on you to show them that we have Royal warrant for our doings in case we are stopped?"

"I have it."

"Come on, then, let us join our fellows. And though I could do with cool liquor as well as any man, having a throat that seems as if it had been transformed into a limekiln, we will have no wayside halts, Master Hood. If our fellows stop at Dog and Duck, or Fox and Goose, they will never move on again until there is more ale under their belts than would be good for them or our adventure. And we will give Driffield the go-by. I know every lane 'twixt here and the coast, and where there isn't a lane or a bridle-path we will go across the land."

And Grice rode forward and assumed the lead, while Hood brought up the rear, wondering how he could contrive to escape the sailmaker's notice and secure St. Peter's chalice for himself. So far all Grice's schemes had gone well. The vessel in which they meant to carry Alan to London was all ready for sea, and was manned and provisioned, and had been brought out of the harbour, and now she lay at anchor in the Bay, opposite the hamlet of Wilsthorpe, from the beach of which Grice meant to put

his prisoner on board, having no mind to carry him through the streets of the old town and the Quay. Given a favourable wind, there would be naught to do then but sail for London. All ran smoothly for Grice, but Hood was not disposed to feel that things were running pleasantly for himself. He was convinced that the chalice was worth much more than Grice supposed, and he was inclined to throw up whatever prospect he had of profiting by Alan's capture if he could only get possession of the treasure and make off with it. And as they rode along he meditated on his chances of riding boldly away and leaving Grice to do what he pleased with Alan.

But open enough as the country was on all sides of them, Hood knew that it would be hopeless to attempt to escape. The sailmaker was an astute and a far-seeing man, and when he had mounted his little band of kidnappers he had taken good care that Hood was not provided with the best nor the second best. There were three men who were better mounted than Hood, and would be able to run him down if he offered to bolt. And there was another matter—Grice had seen to it that Hood went unarmed. He, himself, and the rest of his gang were armed well enough, but Hood had not so much as a hanger at his side, and not even the ghost of a pistol. He was as much a prisoner as the unfortunate young lord who rode before him, and who was not only pinioned, but gagged, and could only use his hands to steady himself in his saddle. And so, turn-

ing his attention to schemes of resuming undivided possession of the chalice at the last hour, he rode on with the rest in sullen silence, cursing his own folly in ever going near the sailmaker at all.

Grice led his men and their prisoner towards the coast with a sure knowledge of the lie of the land. The high road to Bridlington lay direct through Driffield and by the town-end of Nafferton village, and through the streets of Burton Agnes and Carnaby, but Grice would have none of it. He skirted the market-town by the narrow lanes which surrounded the apple-orchards, and then conceiving a bold idea, left highroad and villages altogether and struck boldly for the low headlands between Barmston and Fraisthorpe, and so got down to the level of the sea. And there Alan saw a smart-looking barque riding lazily at anchor in the blue water under the blue sky, and beyond it the great chalk cliffs of Flamborough Head shone white and dazzling in the fierce sunlight. And at last men and horses stopped at a point of the smooth beach, where a boat lay at the water's edge in charge of one man.

Grice bade Flamborough Dick take the gag off the prisoner's mouth. Let him shout himself to a whisper, if he liked. There were no ears to hear him there, unless the razor-bills and the oyster-catchers and the sandpipers and the rest of the seabirds had ears.

But Alan had no disposition to shout. He merely asked Grice, whom he recognised as leader, what

they were going to do with him. Hood he bestowed one glance upon, and then ignored.

"Do with you? Carry your lordship to London. Yonder is the vessel destined for your lordship's accommodation. Given a good wind, and we will run you up Thames and in at Traitors' Gate—or wher-e'er it is they have such prizes delivered—in three days."

"Then treat me with some decency until you get me there. For one thing, don't let me be offended by the sight of that fellow, whose neck I am grieved I did not break in York streets!"

Hood snarled and muttered.

"Mind I don't break yours! And so I would now, if I did not want to see it and the headsman's axe made acquainted."

"No arguing!" commanded Tubal. "Your lordship shall have such accommodation as is consistent with your safety—and you can pay for. I dare say a few good guineas can be found about you. Now, lads, take your prisoner aboard. Flamborough Dick—he is in your charge, and you know how to hold him. And bear in mind what I told you about watching for my signal to-night. If the wind rises, then look out for it all the earlier, and bring her round off the harbour mouth. You, Jim Storey, take the three horses to the Quay, put them up, keep your tongue close, and meet me underneath my loft after dark."

When the men had carried Alan off in the boat, and the horses which they had used had been led

away, Grice turned to Hood and favoured him with a grin.

"Now, friend Hood, all is going well, and it is time for you to keep that promise of yours. Where is the cup?"

Hood scowled.

"We are not much better off than we were," he grumbled. "It is true we have the lad in yonder boat. But we have no wind."

Grice looked steadily at his companion. And then, with great deliberation, he drew his pistol out of his skirts.

"Hark ye, friend Hood," he said, "a bargain's a bargain. You gave your word to produce that cup when we had the young fellow in our hands. There he is! And if anybody can get him off that ship, then—but you know they can't. Now, if you don't keep your promise, by the Lord, I'll blow your brains, or your lights, or something out of you before the day's over! Come now!"

"Let me go fetch it, then. We shall only attract attention, going together."

"Oh—it's buried, I suppose, right in front of the Abbey, or at the Quay Head? No nonsense, Hood! where is it?"

"In a coppice on the road-side between the town and Bempton village," answered Hood sulkily.

"Then off we go to find it. And no trying to get away with it, Master Parson. I have a nasty trick of shooting uncommonly straight, and I should not like to hurt you."

"I was a fool ever to come near you!" growled Hood, as he climbed into his saddle. "You do naught but rob and cheat me."

"There's gratitude for you! And I have kept you safe, and fed you, and let you drink as much as ever you wished, and far more than was good for you, this past month! Well, well!—you had better keep a civil tongue, or I shall insist on having two-thirds of all the money that is coming to us, instead of only one half. Now, lead on round the Quay and the old town."

It was late in the afternoon when the two men reached the wayside covert in which Hood had hidden St. Peter's chalice. Grice looked about him with speculating glances as they dismounted and tied up their horses to the fence which separated the covert from the road. Although he knew him to be unarmed, he was doubtful of Hood, and was half-expecting to hear him say that the treasure had been stolen from its hiding-place. And he was more than half incredulous that the treasure was really there; to deposit anything so valuable in a roadside coppice seemed to him a strange thing to do.

"And you mean to say that you have left this precious bauble all these weeks—four—five!—amongst this bit of bush and scrub!" he exclaimed, suspiciously. "I expect you will tell me that the field mice have eaten it."

"I wish they had eaten your share of it!" snarled Hood, pushing his way through the bushes.

"If they had, there would have been none for

you, for I should have taken yours for your board and lodging. Come, now, no fooling with me, friend Hood! Is this really where you deposited the cup?"

Hood kicked a bundle out from beneath the brambles, and hastily unfolding the wrappings held up the chalice before the sailmaker's astonished eyes. Grice gave vent to a sharp whistle.

"The devil! Ten thous—million devils! Here, let me see it—feel it—handle it! What the—ah, there must be at least eighty ounces of it! And then the jewels! Lord!—I do not know half of them. Did I say you were a wise man to come to me!"

"You did, and I was naught but a fool! I did not know you were such a thief as you are."

"Thief! Benefactor, my lad! Hah!—this is no gewgaw for you to deal with. You would have sold this for maybe its mere weight as old gold; I tell you England is no place wherein to sell it, no, not even London itself. We will have this over to the Continent; we will sell it to the Pope of Rome himself, or at any rate to one of his cardinals."

"The Pope and his cardinals be damned, and you too!" growled Hood. "I should have had all I got for it, at any rate, instead of having to share. Give it back!"

But Grice stepped back and motioned his companion off.

"Nay, it is more seemly that I should carry this than entrust it to your sacrilegious hands," he said, grinning. "Get you back to the horses, and open the mouth of that bag which hangs at my saddle-

bow. And don't be ungrateful. Leave all to me. I am a better hand at moneymaking than you are. The half of what I shall get for this in Antwerp or in Brussels, parson, will be much more than what you would have sold it for. And I will be scrupulously fair to you. One-half of what this young rebel fetches, and one-half of what we sell this pretty bit of work for—that shall be yours. And I am charging you naught for the ship, and the five stout lads who are on her, nor for the hire of beasts this afternoon, nor for your five weeks' bed and board."

"And you have small need! But I am a fool. I walked into your web as fondly as any fly ever approached spider!'

And Hood, having against his will helped to deposit the chalice in Grice's saddle-bag, mounted his horse and rode back towards Bridlington in a moody and melancholy and resentful state of mind. And of a sudden he woke out of his gloom and looked sideways at the sailmaker, who was joyfully conputing the value of the treasure at his knee for the fiftieth time.

"There is one thing you seem to have forgotten," he said.

"Name it," responded Grice cheerfully.

"What you have in your bag is a matter that cannot be hidden in a corner. You know it is being cried about all over this side of Yorkshire already, and all over England for aught I know."

"Well?"

"Sooner or later, if it is sold on the Continent,

the news of it will get here, and our names, or at any rate, some tidings of us, will come with the news."

"I hear you. What of that?"

"Only that you will find the constables awaiting you when you come home again."

"And what about yourself?"

"I am not coming back. I am going elsewhere—to America."

"Go, then, and never mind me. Maybe I am not coming back, either. And as a matter of fact, I am not. This sail-making business is not as good as it was, for Hull is too near on one side, and Whitby on the other. I am going to settle down in the Low Countries, Master Hood, and start a little business in silks and lace and spirits. And to show you how I appreciate your talents, I was going to ask you to join in with me. But you can go to America if you wish it."

Hood made no answer just then. He rode on in silence for a time.

"We will see about that later," he said at last. "I will consider it when I find how you treat me in this affair. Are we going straight aboard or what?"

For they were now close to the town, and beyond it they saw the quay, and beyond that the south part of the Bay and their vessel lying where they had left her, with the last rays of the sun shining on her tall masts and spars.

"No," answered Grice. "First, to my place. I have certain things to carry off, and you can help me. As

soon as it is dark, we will go out at the back, and take boat. Dick will have brought her up to the harbour mouth by that time."

"If he has wind to do it," muttered Hood, looking at the sky.

"There is some wind rising now and there will be more. We shall get off to-night."

Leaving the horses at the stable from which Grice had hired them earlier in the day, they went down to the head of the harbour and into his house, which, taller by half its own height than its fellows, looked like some gaunt sentinel keeping watch over the quay and the wharves. The sailmaker, who carried the saddle-bag over his shoulder, let Hood and himself in by the side door and locked and barred it behind them. Everything seemed unusually quiet and Hood involuntarily shivered.

"The place strikes one like a tomb!" he said.

"That is because no sun ever gets into these lower regions, and besides, it has been an uncommonly hot day," answered Grice.

"And it is as quiet as the grave," added Hood.

"That is because the lads are not working, but on board the ship," chuckled Grice. "And as I have neither wife nor child, kith nor kin, why, of course, there is no one in the house but ourselves. You see how good I am to you, friend Hood! There you are, shut up with me, and no one near—why, if I liked, I could put a bullet through you, and throw your lean carcase in the cellar, and——"

"Curse it, stay all that, and let us have food and

drink!" exclaimed Hood, who had secretly resolved to lay hands on the first weapon he came across. "And let us get out of this to the ship—I hate your quiet, deserted houses! So long as I heard your lads' voices at their work, or even saw that old hag going about with her pails and brushes, I could bear your house, but as it is, it gives me the shivers."

"That's due to a bad conscience. Here, we have earned a drop of liquor. That first, and then we will see to some supper, and then we will make ready those chests, and then—— What's that?"

Hood, whose nervous system, weakened by a too generous devotion to the bottle, had been all a-quiver since entering the deserted house, started uneasily as a loud, violent knocking sounded on the door which opened on the square at the head of the harbour. He stared at Grice; the sailmaker stared in the direction from which the sound came. He hurriedly picked up the saddle-bag from the table, and from the skirt of his riding-coat he withdrew one of his pistols and cocked it.

"There is somewhat that is too insistent in that summons, parson," he said. "We are followed!"

"You should have shot the girl instead of the horse," growled Hood. "At any rate we might have bound and left her. She has come after us. Listen to that!"

The knocking had begun again, and was now continuous, and it was not only being made on the door, but on the shutters of the lower windows. Grice listened, looking about him undecidedly.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Hood. "Had we not better get out by the back and make off to the ship?"

"And leave what I want to carry away? Not I! Come on to the next floor; we can look out from there and see what is afoot."

"Give me the bag, so that you can look to your pistol," suggested Hood, as they made for the stairs.

"I can look to my pistols and to the bag as well. Go you up first," said Grice, and motioned his companion to precede him. "And keep your face behind the curtains; if we lead them to think that the house is empty they will, maybe, go away."

"If they do, they will only board the ship," said Hood. "There are plenty of folk about on the Quay to tell them it is yours."

Grice made no answer. He motioned Hood to enter a room which overlooked the open space in front of the house; together they tiptoed to a bow window across which curtains were drawn to half its height; through the narrow slits in the lacework they peered cautiously at the scene below. And Grice uttered a savage curse.

"Now I wish I had put that bullet through the lass instead of the horse! There she is! And I see what she has done. There is old Matthew Lowten, the innkeeper of Driffield, and his lads with him, and half the rabble of the Quay, and what is worse there are our constables, and Mr. Ingleby, the magistrate. We are in a corner."

"The back of the house!" exclaimed Hood. "Quick!"

"Too late!" answered Grice. "They are knocking there now. At least, they are at the side door. The thing to be considered is—will they break in? If we can last out until dark——"

"What then?"

"If we can last out until dark, and they do not put off to the ship, I know how we can get away. Upstairs with you, to the sail loft!"

And Grice, who still clung to the saddle-bag and its precious contents with one hand, and held his pistol in the other, motioned Hood out of the room and to a stair that led through the middle of the house to the gloomy heights above. It terminated at last in a ladder, at the head of which was a square opening.

"Up! Come—I am twice as nimble as you, and my hands are full," exclaimed Grice. "Now, then, let them break in if they like—they will not get at us here. Let the trapdoor down. Plague upon it!—if only we had secured that girl! But who would have thought that she would have had the spirit to follow us like that?"

"Anybody but a fool would have thought so," snarled Hood. "The lad is most likely her lover. Did I not see her visit him in the church tower? And how are we to get out of this?"

He had shut down the trap-door by which they had entered from the ladder, and had slipped a bolt over it, and now as he looked round him in the

rapidly gathering gloom he saw that they were in a loft in the roof from which there seemed no exit other than that at their feet. There was no underdrawing to the tiles above them; the sides and ends of the place were packed with stores; the only light which came in was through the crannies and niches in the roof. But as he looked more closely into the shadows, Hood became conscious of strange shapes and finally of certain lines of grey light, which seemed to suggest a doorway. He repeated his question.

"Let a man get his breath," answered the sail-maker, who had sat down on a pile of sail-cloth. "I tell you we are safe as soon as darkness comes. Look there. That is a windlass, and a rope, and yonder is a door. That door overhangs a corner of the harbour into which they can't get, Master Hood —it makes a little creek running between the two angles of this house. Wait awhile, and we will get down by the rope. As I have to carry the bag, you can let me down first. You yourself can easily scramble down, being lean and light. Only, take care not to fall—we are seventy feet above ground level here."

"And when we are down, what then? How much better off shall we be?"

"As much better off as we are now than we should have been if we had stopped downstairs. Wait awhile, and you will see what will happen. There is a boat below there."

"And those chests of yours?"

"Those chests will have to be left behind—all but one. That is up here—this is my treasure chamber. It is only a small chest that I must carry away. The rest, I say, I shall have to leave behind. No use encumbering yourself with needless matters at a time like this. And that reminds me that there is something else I am going to leave behind."

"What?" asked Hood, who had seated himself in close proximity to the sailmaker, impelled by an inevitable desire to be near the saddle-bag and its treasure. "What?"

"Only something that I have no further use for," answered Grice, stealthily moving the hand that held the pistol. "Look into yon corner!"

And as Hood turned his head towards the shadows Grice lifted the pistol and shot him through the brain. The body lurched, jerked, and rolled over heavily across the pile of sacking.

"A good riddance!" muttered Grice. "You were of no more use to me, parson, and you were only in the way. Every man for himself, and now for myself."

He pushed the body away from him with his foot, and having laid the saddle-bag aside and put the pistol back in his pocket, proceeded to heap over it a quantity of the sail-cloth and sacking which lay about the loft. His eyes had now grown accustomed to the gloom of the place, and he made his dispositions with sureness and celerity of movement. From beneath a pile of odds and ends he brought out a small box of rough deal, and forcing off the lid drew

from it a couple of canvas bags, which he stuffed into the saddle-bag on either side the bundle wherein the chalice was still wrapped.

"All that will go on my shoulders," he muttered. "It is going to be an easy job, after all. Now, for the rope."

There was a long rope attached to the windlass, and lying in a great coil at its foot; Grice uncoiled it yard by yard, and with infinite patience began to tie knots in its entire length, at intervals of two feet. And when this task had come to an end, and the knotted rope was lying festooned about the floor, he went over to the door and cautiously opened one half of it, and stretching himself full length on the sill looked out on the harbour and the sea.

The sun had gone down for a good hour, and the summer evening was fast fading into the summer night. There were long shadows across the quiet waters within the harbour wall, and here and there the reflection of a lamp or a candle burning in some quayside cottage mingled with them. Outside the harbour mouth, a mile away in front of him he made out the masts and spars of his ship; it seemed to him that Flamborough Dick had not been able to bring her much nearer land. And round the corner of the house came little more than a breath of air. There was going to be no wind from the north, nor north-west, nor north-east, to carry them out of the Bay that night, he said to himself with a curse. Nevertheless, he must get aboard. The knocking at his doors had ceased for some time; from the open

space before his house he heard no more than the usual gabble of voices which rose from the idlers at the harbour-head every night; he judged that Freda and her posse of helpers had gone elsewhere, maybe to get authority to break in upon him. If only a good, strong, stirring wind would rise—if only a breeze would spring up in sufficient strength to carry the ship a few miles off the mainland! But it was no use wishing anything, and no use staying there; he must get aboard.

Grice looked carefully down at what lay beneath him. A tiny arm of the harbour projected into a basin, made by the two wings of his house, and lay a good seventy or eighty feet below the sail-loft. On his side of it there was a narrow landing place, paved with rough cobbles, and furnished with steps that went down into the water; to an iron ring in the wall of these steps a small boat was moored. This small landing-place could only be overlooked from the house or seen from the harbour; there was nobody about in the harbour; there was no one in the house but himself. And retiring from the open door he caught up the knotted rope, and dropped it over the sill, and looking out saw a tiny coil of it curl up, snake like, on the edge of the green water far beneath.

If Grice had looked very narrowly into the shadows behind him as he made the saddle-bag fast around his shoulders, and prepared to let himself down, he might have seen a point of fire in the

gloom which, had he gone closer to it, he would have found to be a human eye that watched his every movement with greedy and malevolent persistency. But he saw nothing, being too anxious to get away, and presently he buttoned his riding-coat tightly about him, seized the rope, gave it a stout jerk to make sure that it was safely attached to the windlass, and went over the edge, letting himself down gradually by the knots which he had tied at the most convenient intervals. And as his head disappeared beyond the sill, Mumping Sal emerged from the darkest corner of the sail-loft, threw herself on the floor, and protruding her ill-omened visage into the twilight, looked down on Grice with her one eye gleaming like a baleful star. And Grice looked up, and saw what was thus presented to him, and the heart within him became as heavy as the cobble-stones over which he dangled, and as cold as the North Sea is when the winds sweep down it from the Arctic regions, and he was filled with a fear that was like to drive him mad with terror. For Grice, even if he had no conscience, was cursed with a memory, and he knew that Mumping Sal had certain scores to pay off and that she would be only too glad to seize the opportunity of revenging herself on her master once for all. And that she had a notion of taking that revenge there and then was only too evident, for in the faint light Grice saw that she was holding a knife to the straining rope, and he knew that one slash of it would send

him crashing to the stones beneath. He groaned in his helplessness, and Mumping Sal laughed fiendishly.

"This will serve you out for the beatings you gave me," she croaked. "I shall come down and sweep your brains into the water for the fishes."

In the midst of her laughter Grice summoned every ounce of strength in his body for an upwards spring. He was but seven feet below her; beneath him were seventy feet of emptiness and at the bottom the hard stones. He was a heavy man and heavily weighted, but he dragged himself upward, knot by knot, with incredible swiftness and agility, until another clutch would have brought his hands on the sill. And then, with a wild shriek of joy, Mumping Sal slashed the rope across and the shriek was drowned in the sailmaker's cry of despair as his body turned over and fell, head first, to the cobbles.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MESSAGE

DURING his various adventures since Culloden Alan had cultivated something of a philosophic mind, and he went aboard Grice's ship determined to keep a calm temper and a keen observation. That he was the victim of a carefully-arranged plot it was easy to see; he realised now that Hood, whom they had all thought to have flown to other countries with his ill-gotten treasure, had been lurking about in the neighbourhood, waiting his opportunity, and evidently gathering about him a gang of desperadoes like himself.

"And a pretty lot of cut-throats they look!" thought Alan, remembering Tubal Grice's foxy hair and narrow-set eyes and looking at Flamborough Dick, who held the tiller. "It is a piece of good fortune that they know there is a thousand pounds to be paid for me in London, else I should be like to suffer murder on the way there for the sake of what I have in my belt. However, 'tis a long way to the Thames, and we are not out of this Bay yet, nor like to be if I know aught of the weather."

But he went on to reflect that in spite of the lack

of wind all things seemed against him. He was not sure that the lad who was with him when Hood and his fellows seized him was dead or living—certainly, he had seen him fall under a savage blow, and the probability was that he was killed. If so, there would be no one to give news of his kidnapping that would lead to his being succoured. He knew that if only Ulf and Thorkill were made aware of what had happened they would ride helter-skelter to Bridlington Bay and board the vessel if they had to swim for it and were alone. But who was to warn them? There was naught for it but to wait and to watch an opportunity. He occupied himself as he was being rowed to the barque in studying the faces of his guard, and he decided that there was not one of them who would not cheerfully cut his grandmother's throat for a shilling.

Flamborough Dick had him down into a cabin in which there was just room to swing a cat, eased him of his bonds (they had already made themselves assured that he carried no firearms), gave him food and drink, and left him guarded by two men who sprawled outside the door. The cabin was as hot as a greenhouse, and making the best of matters Alan lay down on one of its berths and fell fast asleep. And he slept so long and soundly that the twilight was come when he woke, and Flamborough Dick was in the cabin asking him if he wished for his supper. Alan rubbed the sleep out of his eyes and gazed at his jailer.

"Where is that fellow Hood?" he demanded.

"And the other man—he who gave the orders? The red-haired man!"

Flambourough Dick growled out some answer which Alan construed into meaning that the less questions were asked the better.

"Then I take it that they have not yet come aboard. Hark you, friend, I dare say you have no objection to earn a guinea. Now there is no wind, and we shall not be out of this Bay till there is—I am seaman enough to know that. Can you carry me a letter ashore?"

"Money down first."

"Get me pen and ink and paper and you shall have your guinea," said Alan, who had gold in the canvas bag which he still carried round his neck.

"And if you get me a letter ashore and bring me proof that you delivered it to the constable, or the portreeve, or whoever is in authority in this place, you shall have two more."

"Let us see the money," said Flambourough Dick, with true Yorkshire caution.

"Get me the writing things, and you shall see the gold. But—how will you get this letter ashore?"

"There will be no wind to-night. I will take it myself. And not to the constable, but to the parson if he will do—the vicar."

"The vicar will do well enough; but I shall want to see his writing, to be sure that he has got my letter. Now, get those things."

While the man was out of the cabin Alan extracted three guineas from his store. He showed

them to Flamborough Dick in the light of the oil lamp which the man brought in with the writing materials, and then tossed one over to him.

"The other two are yours when you have done what I wish. Now, then, let me write."

Flamborough Dick shuffled his feet uneasily.

"You had best make short work, young master. I don't know when they mayn't be aboard now, as 'tis after dark. But I will keep a look out, and if I see a boat coming off I will whistle."

"Then you shall have another guinea. And there it is—in advance. And listen—there are more guineas where that came from. I do not think you are very like to pick up many from either Hood or the red-haired fellow. Now go."

Flamborough Dick picked up his money, looked curiously at Alan, and went out. And Alan began to write as fast as he could make his bad pen travel over the rough paper.

He wrote to Swend Throxenby, telling him what had happened in the briefest fashion. He was taken, and Hood had taken him. He was on a vessel in Bridlington Bay. He had already been told that he was to be carried to London as soon as there was wind to carry them. He had no doubt that he would be safe enough until he reached London. He asked Swend to use some means of letting Lord Carlisle know of his capture. As for what would result——

At this stage of the letter Flamborough Dick piped a sharp whistle, and presently stuck his head into the cabin.

"There is a boat coming off, young master," he said. "Best to look sharp."

And he went back on deck, only to return a few minutes later.

"'Tis only Jim Storey," he said. "No need to hurry."

Alan went on with his writing. But presently there was a great commotion as the boat came alongside and its occupant climbed into the barque, calling on his mates by name.

"Dick! Ralph! Tom Cruddas—where are ye all? Here is a fine to-do ashore there! Tubal Grice is dead—smashed to pieces he is, and dead as a door-nail."

The men crowded about the newcomer, and Alan crumpled his letter in his hand and made for the cabin door.

"Who says Tubal is dead?" exclaimed Flamborough Dick.

"Who says? I say! 'Cause I saw him. And the other man—Hood, d'ye call him?—is dead, too. They found him in Grice's sail-loft, with his brains blown out."

"Both dead?"

"As dead as—as they can be. This is how it was. Tubal told me to meet him on the little wharf under his sail-loft after dusk. When I had put up the horses I went to the Shining Mackerel, and bided there till it was time to meet him. Then, when it was getting about evening, comes in to the Quay that wench that followed us when we rode off with

the young fellow from Givendale, and with her a half-score or more of Driffield lads, and they had out the constables and the magistrate, and there was such a to-do as never was, and half the folk in the place went with them to Tubal Grice's house, and they were like to pull it down, walls, windows, and doors. And I heard talk that the man Hood is the fellow that stole the gold cup out of Cransthorpe church, and that the young woman was Parson Throxenby's daughter—I mean her that followed us. However, not a word could they get out of that house, for nobody came to door or window. Then there was talk of breaking it in, and they went off for matters to do that with, and so it got dark, and I bethought me of going round to the little wharf. But there were others who thought of that, too, just then, and so there was a nice handful of us made round there by Marshall's stairs, and lo, and behold! when we got there what do we see but Tubal lying on the cobbles at the foot of his sail-loft, warm enough, and some said just breathing, though all the same his brains and blood were there running over the edge of the wharf into the water."

"Dead enough, then!" exclaimed someone.

"Dead, aye, he was dead, I warrant you! And he had a bag on his back, and they took out of it other bags, with money in them—gold money—and there was a parcel of old cloth in it, and inside it was this cup they talked of, all gold and set with shining stones. And after that, naught would do but they must break into the house, and they did, and there

was that old bitch Mumping Sal, mad and crazy, and raving and screeching up and down the place, and in the sail-loft there was this man Hood's body. And his brains were out too, they say Grice pistolled him. So then I slips down to the boat, and came out in double-quick time to tell you. And I heard say as I left them that the young fellow we took this afternoon is wanted, for there are those two great Throxenbys from Cransthorpe come in, and with them a man that has some message for him from London town—some said from the King himself."

Alan strode out from the cabin and seized Flamborough Dick by the elbow.

"You hear what this lad says! Now, then, ten guineas to be shared amongst you if I am put ashore at once! And you had best be quick about it, for if I am not landed quickly you will have these folk after me, and then there will not be a shilling for any of you."

The men made no more ado. Grice was dead, and Hood was dead, and there was no one to look to for their money. Within the minute they had bundled Alan and themselves into the boat in which Jim Storey had come off from the harbour, and were pulling away for dear life, leaving the barque to ride at anchor and see to itself.

They were aware of a crowd of people moving about on the quayside beneath the yellow glimmer of lamps as they pulled in between the two harbour walls, and as they drew nearer they saw several figures getting into a boat. Then Alan recognised

Olaf and Thorkill from their size, and he stood up in his place and shouted to them.

"Olaf! Thorkill! Here I am!"

Whereupon the twins shouted as joyfully and as loudly, and in another minute Alan had leapt up the steps to find himself in the midst of folk who thronged so closely about him that for a while he could not tell one from another. But presently mighty arms dragged him out of the press, and he found Olaf on one side of him and Thorkill on the other, and both talking at once. He turned eagerly from one to the other.

"Freda!" he whispered.

"She is here, lad—out of this crush, and with a gentleman that Thorkill and I met in York, on his way to bring you good news—which is why we are here, for as soon as we heard his news we turned back with him. We got home just as Freda's message about your kidnapping came to the toft. And so we leaped into our saddles and rode here like the devil!"

"Freda? Message? Then she knew that I was taken?"

"Knew? She saw you carried off, and followed, and that villain Tuba! Grice shot her poor beast dead on the roadside. But even then she followed. And Grice is dead, and Hood, too, and we have got St. Peter's cup and—fool that I am!—I leave the best to the last—this messenger that we met has brought —what do you think?—your full and free pardon! You are free, lad!"

And Olaf let out a great shout that rang out over

the dancing waters of the harbour and echoed against the walls of the grey house within which the two dead men lay. But Alan grew very quiet and very pale.

"Where is your sister?" he asked.

"Here she is!" And the brothers forced the crowd aside as if it had been stalks of standing corn. "And none the less thankful that they shot her poor horse instead of shooting you."

Alan cared naught for the crowd, nor for the stranger who stood by—he did not care at that moment whether Freda herself minded what he did or not. And so he took her into his arms without a word and kissed her, and he heard her fetch her breath in a quick little sob, and felt her hand respond to his, and knew that he had won something more than his freedom.

Olaf slapped both of them on the shoulders, laughing indulgently.

"That's all right, children!" said he. "But come to the inn, out of the way of all these folk. And then you shall hear what this gentleman has to tell you."

Alan was in no great mood for aught but being with Freda. But Olaf and Thorkill carried their party into the inn and to a private room, and there Alan had to listen to the message. Whether he liked it or not, the King had granted him a full pardon. He was free.

It was all due to the Earl of Carlisle, said the messenger, who was one of his lordship's secretaries.

And the earl had been so anxious that Alan should hear the good news as soon as possible that he sent him, the messenger, off post-haste with it. And—here the messenger drew Alan a little aside—there was more to tell. For Lord Carlisle had taken trouble to send a trusty man-of-law to Scotland to inquire into Alan's affairs, and as a result some four or five thousands of pounds had been rescued from the wreck of the family fortunes. Which news Alan promptly and loudly announced to Olaf and Thorkill and Freda.

"Now then I will buy me a farm here on the Wolds!" he exclaimed, gleefully. "Blessing on the day that saw Gamel fall into the river at Boroughbridge! But"—and here his face fell, and he turned to the secretary—"but there are perhaps conditions attached to this pardon? Perhaps I am expected to——"

"There are no conditions. It is a full, free, unconditional pardon. Your lordship is at perfect liberty to do what your lordship pleases. All the same, the earl suggests——"

"Yes?" said Alan eagerly. "He suggests——?"

"That it may be wise if your lordship withdraws from public life for a time and leads a quiet existence."

Alan laughed and looked at Freda.

"I agree with my kinsman," he said. "And I shall thank him for the suggestion as I shall thank him for all else—with the deepest gratitude."

An hour later, as they all went across the Wolds

homewards to Cransthorpe in the summer night Alan touched Freda's arm as she rode at his side.

"You heard what I said in the inn to my lord's secretary?" he said.

"Yes, I heard," she answered.

"And you know what I meant. I am going to say—no, I have said—good-bye to the past. We are going to be plain goodman and goodwife, you and I, Freda. That is, if you think as I think. You have no desire that I should take you there where there is naught but the ruin of the past; you would rather that we lived our lives here, where the future is new before us?"

Freda leaned nearer to him and put her hand in his.

"Here or there, Alan," she answered in the darkness. "There or here—so long as we are together!"

THE END

University of North Carolina at
Greensboro, North Carolina 27412

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